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## ABSTRACT

A YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR  
SMALL GROUP LEADERS AT THE WESTCHESTER  
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH  
IN MIAMI, FLORIDA

by

Denis Leroy Sand

Adviser: Ricardo Norton

# ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Document

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: A YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR SMALL  
GROUP LEADERS AT THE WESTCHESTER SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST  
CHURCH IN MIAMI, FLORIDA

Name of the researcher: Denis Leroy Sand

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Date completed: May 2013

## Problem

Even though the Westchester Seventh-day Adventist Church in Miami manifests interest in its youth it has lacked a clear, planned, and structured program by which to train its youth into Christian ministry, outreach, and leadership. By not training the youth it is putting in danger its own leadership future, losing a precious opportunity to reach other youth for Christ, not fully fulfilling Christ's call to thoroughly equip disciples, and is in danger of having its youth become mere spectators. In response to this problem this investigation is to study, develop, implement, and evaluate a small group leadership training program to involve the youth of the Westchester Seventh-day Adventist Church (WSDAC).



## Method

After a pre-launch period of study, protocols, recruitment, and initial organization, I launched a prototype group in my house in the southwest area of Miami. That initial group of nine young people was trained and later multiplied itself birthing new leaders and new Growth Groups (GG). A structure was created to provide coaching to leaders and groups and to foster healthy multiplying groups. Lastly, the whole training program was evaluated by looking at the number of leaders developed, the number of groups planted, and the commitment of the youth involved.

## Results

After approximately two and a half years of implementation, the GG training program gave the following report: (1) the program that started with the youth had encompassed the whole church; (2) there were dedicated GGs for early teens, teens, young adults, couples, adults, and intergenerational families; (3) the total number of groups in the WSDAC was 26 (9 adults groups, 8 young adults groups, 5 teen groups, 2 early teen groups, 1 intergenerational group, and 1 couples group); (4) 14 group meetings were held in English and 12 in Spanish; (5) by January 2011, there were 104 leaders trained; (6) youth involvement and leadership highly increased; (7) there were 10 baptisms in 2010 directly from the work of GG; (8) a GG was planted and met weekly at the Florida International University (one baptism from it already); (9) two visitors from a non-Adventist background reached the goal of going from visitor to leader within a year (came to a GG, studied the Bible, were baptized, then trained into leadership and led a new group); (10) two other nearby Adventist churches adopted the GG training program, trained their leaders, and multiplied their own groups (one of them is planting a new

church based on GG); (11) GG training was given seven times in the WSDAC, four times in other nearby churches, and three times to pioneers working with Muslims in Central Asia countries; (12) the training manual intended for the WSDAC became the official training manual for the whole Florida Conference in Spanish and soon also in English; (13) the GG training has been adapted and is now being translated to Russian, plus it has become the official training material of the Southern Union of the Euro-Asian Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

### Conclusions

This project has demonstrated the huge potential that youth have when rightly trained and coached in reaching their friends for Jesus. It also confirmed their willingness and passion when they embrace a God-given vision and plan. Small groups with a right philosophy and practice have proven once again to be one of the best ways in which to involve youth and adults in Christian ministry, leadership, and outreach to keep people accountable, to help them grow in holiness towards spiritual maturity, and in fulfilling God's purpose for their lives.

### Future Development

This project, since its beginning, has always been in constant change. Currently it is being adapted so that group leaders in Central Asia can use it especially to reach indigenous peoples, most of whom are Muslim. For more information on the whole program visit [www.growthgroups.net](http://www.growthgroups.net)

Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

A YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR  
SMALL GROUP LEADERS AT THE WESTCHESTER  
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IN MIAMI, FLORIDA

A Project Document  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by  
Denis Leroy Sand

May 2013

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Date approved

To Ingrid, my beloved companion and wife,  
and to Adriel, Mattias, and Josiah, who fill my life with joy

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DNA	The deoxyribonucleic acid, that is present in almost all living organisms that carry the fundamental and distinctive genetic information of a cell. For the purpose of this research it refers to the key basic elements that contain the genetic instruction for heredity, reproduction and well-functioning of a healthy small group
GG	Growth Groups
NIV	New International Version
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist Church
WAY	Westchester Adventist Youth
WSDAC	Westchester Seventh-day Adventist Church

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Getting young church members actively involved in outreach and Christian leadership is a long-lasting challenge facing local pastors and church administrators. Nonetheless, this is crucial not only for the survival of the Christian Church but also for the completion of the mission given by Christ (Matt 28:19, 20).

This project intends to help by offering a possible solution for the challenge of having youth actively involved in outreach and Christian leadership. This chapter analyzes the background of the problem that has contributed in different ways to what is seen today. It also presents the statement of the problem as it relates to one specific church. Also, there is a description of the task of this project. There is also a justification for this research followed by a description of the process followed. A presentation of the limitations and delimitations for this work will be addressed. Lastly, the chapter will end with a clarification of some key terms used in the project.

#### **Background of the Problem**

The Christian church in North America seems to be in a state of inward focus. Some authors (Stetzer, 2006; Adams, 2009) believe that most churches basically follow a Constantinian model of doing church, which means some professionals (called clergy) do most of the work, leaving the spectators (called laity) with the simple task of coming to a

building (called temple) and watching the well-planned and orchestrated programs offered on a weekly basis (called worship service). Many Christians seem to believe that this is what God intends them to do and pursue no further involvement throughout the week.

Adventism seems to follow its evangelical cousins in this direction. Most of the activities take place mainly on the Sabbath, and members seem to be content with participating in them and then to continue with their regular lives throughout the rest of the week. For many, church is a program, and its success is measured by the attendance to those programs. In general Adventism in North America has become program based. Most Adventist churches are experiencing what has been described by Sahlin (2009) as the “graying of Adventism,” a reference to the aging of the membership and the absence of young people (especially in leadership). It is a fact that more than 60% of the Adventist membership in North America is over 45 years of age, while 22% are over 65 years old, and only 9% are under 25 years (Kidder, 2008, para. 4).

In September 2008, Bob Smith, president of Review and Herald Publishing Association, acknowledged the fact that young people are leaving our churches. He stated that this is confirmed by research done which shows that “70 to 88 percent of teens who are involved in a church youth group will stop attending church within two years of their high school graduation” (Southern Baptist Convention, as cited in Smith, 2008).

The same worrying fact was presented by Stier (2002), when he wrote: “we would estimate that about one out of three teenagers is likely to attend a Christian church after they leave home” (p. 67). Those teenagers are young adults in our churches today.

Many of the Adventist youth live as the rest of the community does, a self-centered and fun-thirsty life. Sahlin (2003) writes that as the “Adventist faith enters the 21st century the risk that self-centered religion will become dominant as the Church struggles to keep missional goals is clear and strong” (p. 75). Stier (2002) rightly argues that “today, instead of the church’s impacting our culture, our culture is impacting the church” (p. 41).

It is also clear that many of the Adventist church members are not doing outreach. According to Sahlin’s (2003) study, only about a third of Adventists have a vision for mission (p. 95). Kidder (2008) also found in a study directed by the Institute of Church Ministry at Andrews University that only one third of Adventists are involved directly or indirectly in reaching others for Christ (para. 8). It is of no surprise that the young people follow the example set by adults and have little or no vision for evangelism.

Furthermore, for many of our Adventist members evangelism is still an event to which you invite people to. It seems that the common word used is ‘come’ to this program, event, and Bible series at our church building. Evangelism is more and more seen as an important function that needs professional communicators or theologians.

Many youth ministries are event-oriented, which seems to have been borrowed from other evangelical churches. With this approach there are many events and activities for our youth but no real, practical, hands-on-training on how to be a disciple who makes more disciples for Jesus Christ.

Kidder (2008) also found that only 36% of Adventists in North America participate in a “small group or Home Bible Fellowship.” Clearly most Adventists in North America have not experienced the joy and opportunities of doing life in groups.

At the same time it needs to be considered that “today . . . 75% of the West has moved to postmodern assumptions, leaving the modernist presentation of the Gospel incoherent and implausible to the postmodern mind” (Stier, 2002, p. 41). Most churches and small groups still function under modern assumptions, which as Stier mentioned, leave the postmodern mind lost. A new approach with a postmodern mindset is urgently needed.

### **The Problem**

The Great Commission of Matt 28:19, 20 includes making young disciples. For that reason young disciples need to be trained in the basics of Christian ministry so they can be successful in reaching others for Christ.

The local church needs to be careful in developing ways in which to train their youth in order to help them grow and be effective in their witnessing. The Westchester Seventh-day Adventist Church (WSDAC) in Miami, Florida, has not had a clear, planned and structured program by which to train their youth into Christian ministry and leadership. This needs to be an ongoing effort instead of some sporadic events. At the same time, the youth need to have an environment where they can be deployed to practice their newly learned abilities, and in which they can make significant contributions to the growth and maturity of others.

The WSDAC is putting in danger its own leadership future. If a church places little or sporadic attention to the training of its youth it will certainly cripple its leadership potential. Young people need to be seen not as part of the distant future but as an integral part of today’s reality, otherwise they would never become the leaders the church so urgently needs. This is a crucial need not only for the survival of the church, but also for



the survival of those young people whom if not allowed to grow and serve in leadership will use their energies somewhere else.

At the same time, the WSDAC is losing the precious opportunity to reach other youth for Christ. It is a fact that no one is more capable to reach the youth than the youth itself. The youth of the church have friends and acquaintances who would listen gladly to them as to no one else. They can make a huge impact in reaching their circle of influence if they are trained, equipped, and encouraged to share their faith. This cannot be taken lightly because the potential of rightly trained youth in reaching others will prove to be paramount.

By not having a planned program for the development of youth into Christian leadership and ministry, the WSDAC is also not fulfilling the divine call to thoroughly equip disciples. Young people need to be challenged to grow and become Christ's ambassadors but for that they need to be trained as Jesus did with his disciples. When young people are trained and then they work in reaching their friends for Christ their own faith and Christian experience will be challenged, deepened, and solidified. This will prove to be the best method of keeping our youth from leaving the faith.

Lastly, the WSDAC needs to see the increasing danger of having its youth becoming mere spectators. The church needs more active disciples who make more disciples, and not people who only evaluate the performance of others. Young people need to become actively involved in the leadership and ministry of the WSDAC.

### **Purpose of the Project**

The purpose of this project is to develop, implement, and evaluate a small group leadership training program to involve the WSDAC youth in outreach ministry. This will

benefit the WSDAC, its youth, leadership potential, and outreach.

### **Justification of the Project**

There are seven items that justify the development, implementation, and evaluation of a training program to involve the WSDAC youth in a small group leadership training program.

#### **The Need for Young Soldiers for the Great Controversy**

The first reason for this project is the urgent need our church and the world have for young soldiers for Christ. Being that our planet is the battlefield of the Great Controversy between Satan and God, the actions of God's children and the redemption of the lost are crucial to God's kingdom. Sin abounds, and people have become more self-centered than ever. Our church is not that far in following the world in its way of living, and many times there seems to be little difference in the way those who know Christ live from those who do not.

Boren (2010) argues that:

most people live according to the rhythms that have been shaped by a broader culture. Even in our churches this is the case, although most of us don't want to think that we live like those who don't know Jesus. But the reality is that church people work just as many hours per week, watch just as much television, spend their money in similar ways, and have just as many family struggles as the unchurched. (p. 45)

It seems clear that the church's many programs and events for the youth are not bringing much change into their self-centered, fun, hungry, and many times aimless living.

At the same time, the youth are not being prepared as spiritual and capable leaders in the church. There is an urgent need of young leaders who are mission driven and kingdom principled. But the church seems to be led by people who are much older and

out-of-touch with youth realities. Sahlin (2009) argues that “the gap between the leaders who make the decisions in the Church (from local boards on up) is more like two full generations” (para. 4).

### The Great Commission and Outreach

The second reason for this project is the Great Commission (Matt 28:19, 20) given by Christ by which disciples are to be made out of every nation, kindred, and tongue. This mandate urges Christ’s followers to reach their circle of influence (family, friends, and acquaintances) for God’s kingdom. This, of course, includes the youth of WSDAC. They need to be taught how to reach their friends for Christ because this is God’s plan for each one of them.

Research points out the great opportunity young people have with their friends. Barna asserts that “nine out of ten unchurched teens say they would go to church if they were invited by a friend. That means that 90% of your youth group members’ friends are just waiting to be invited to attend” (as cited in Stier, 2002, p. 82).

The work assigned by God will not be completed with the work of the professional and full-time ministers. It is time the priesthood of all believers stops being only a doctrine in which the church believes in and becomes instead an integral part of each believer’s life.

How is the Westchester community in Miami going to be reached for Christ if the youth do not become God’s instruments? How will the more than 39,000 students at Florida International University (less than half a mile away from the WSDAC) be reached if the WSDAC youth do not become completely and passionately involved in reaching their friends for Christ?

## Youth's Potential for Ministry

The third reason for this project is the WSDAC youth itself. The reality is that the youth is one of the greatest assets of the church. Stier (2002) correctly points out that the “fastest growing religions and cults uncork the bottled-up energy of teenagers and expect an explosion of changed lives. From Muslims to Mormons, students are viewed not as a liability to be baby-sat but as a resource to be utilized” (p. 59).

The WSDAC youth needs to become part of the army that Ellen G. White wrote about in 1903 when she stated, “With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world!” (p. 271). Without a planned and proper training this will not take place. White (1915) saw the need to train our youth and acknowledged that it will require great effort and a special kind of people.

At the same time the youth need to be called to holiness and purposeful living. They need to be challenged with the divine call to a life of service and mission for Christ.

## Today's Prevailing Postmodern Mindset

The fourth reason for this project is the postmodern mindset. According to Stier (2002), 75% of the Western world has moved into postmodern thinking. For that reason the methods originating from a modern worldview and thinking will prove to be especially unsuccessful in reaching today's youth.

Stier (2002) points out that today's teens are more “experiential than logical,” more “open to spiritual ideas,” and “love a good story.” He mentions that “the challenge lies before us to reach a generation that hears with its eyes and thinks with its feelings” (Stier, 2002, p. 188).

Methods of evangelism with postmoderns need to be different. Norman (2003) presents a good comparison between the premodern, modern, and postmodern methods of evangelism (see Appendix G). According to him working with postmoderns need to include the following key elements: relational persuasion, joined experience and spirituality, practical living giving credibility to truth, a lifestyle approach, personal fellowship groups with need sharing in dialogue, the church as a community center that provides a sense of family closeness, and an interest in relationships with long term integration before and after baptism (p. 43).

### The Potential of Youth Small Groups

The fifth reason for having a developing program for youth small group leadership is the clear and real potential of small groups. Small groups are recognized even by non-believers as great tools to carry a message and bring transformation. This potential of small groups is very well described by the great Cambridge historian Butterfield when he wrote:

The strongest organizational unit in the world's history would appear to be that which we call a cell because it is a remorseless self-multiplier; is exceptionally difficult to destroy; can preserve its intensity of local life while vast organizations quickly wither when they are weakened at the center; can defy the power of governments; is the appropriate lever of prising open any status quo. Whether we take early Christianity or sixteenth—century Calvinism or modern communism, this seems the appointed way by which a mere handful of people may open up a new chapter in the history of civilization. (as cited in Comiskey, 1997, p. 27)

Small groups can have even more potential and be more useful with today's youth because "most unbelieving students would not enter a church building, but they would go with a friend to a gathering at another student's house" (Highland Baptist College Ministries, 1997, p. 19).

Furthermore, Sauder, Eberly, Harmon and Mohler (1997) argue that “cell groups provide the ideal place for young people to realize their full potential. . . . With their enthusiasm and drive, they can awaken even lethargic adults to new zeal to get out there and do the work of ministry as they build healthy relationships with each other” (p. 12, 13).

### The Need of a Strong Small Group Leadership

The sixth reason for a program to develop youth small group leaders is the crucial importance of the leadership of these small groups.

The *Student Leadership Training Manual for Youth Workers* (2000) argues that “if you are serious about affecting lives, then you need to create ways for young people to be stretched and challenged. One way to do that is to develop an effective student leadership program” (p. 21).

Icenogle (1994) aptly adds that in order to have successful small groups “the development of intentional small group leaders is crucial” (p. 90), and that the “the church must be willing to seek out, train, empower and appoint to leadership key men and women who are gifted by God to lead the church into strong small group ministry” (pp. 90, 91).

The importance of small group leadership development is emphasized by Comiskey (2000) when he correctly remarks that “churches do not reap the harvest because they have small groups. They reap the harvest because they have harvest workers. Churches that have no plan to develop leaders have by default, planned to lose the harvest” (p. 16). Donahue and Robinson also believe that “an emerging small group ministry cannot succeed without a commitment to effective leadership development. . . .

A small group ministry rises and falls on the quality of its leaders” (as cited in Early, 2001b, p. 10). And Greggo (2008) adds that “groups that do not make use of a trained leader unnecessarily limits the life-changing results that can come from group strategies” (pp. 25, 26). The preparation of leaders is then not optional, but mandatory for successful small groups.

### **Youth Openness to Change and new Paradigms**

The seventh and last reason for having a youth Small Group (SG) leadership training is the need for change and a new paradigm in the WSDAC. The dangers of not having the youth involved in ministry, of not training them to reach their friends and of finally losing them are too high to bypass. Change is urgently needed or we may face extinction (Gibbs, 2005, p. 67).

The reality is that the youth who usually have little fears, are eager to change, learn, and take risks. They are the perfect group to work with in bringing in the much needed change. And as McNeal wrote, “Just because we don’t know how to do something doesn’t mean we shouldn’t try to do it” (as cited in Cordle, 2005, p. 115).

Because of these seven mentioned reasons the creation of a development plan for youth small group leadership training at the WSDAC is both crucial and urgent.

### **Description of the Process**

The project started by identifying the challenges the WSDAC youth were facing as they were perceived by the youth themselves and the leaders of the church.

Once the problems were identified a plan was made to have a thorough program that would train the youth to become leaders of small groups and reach their friends for

Christ. The plan included emphasizing the areas of knowing, becoming, and doing, while giving especial importance to practicing before actually performing. For this purpose a training manual was prepared that had ten sessions of training.

The plan was submitted to the WSDAC board for consideration and approval. It was also presented to the youth's leadership committee for further input and participation.

The program was implemented in several steps. First, potential leaders were selected. Then these youth were trained with the training manual that was prepared. This took place along with the weekly practices. Last, came the time for the multiplication of the prototype group and the launch of the new groups.

Part of the implementation included having leaders and groups multiply every year giving birth to new leaders and groups. This was the extension stage of the program.

The program also included having successful small group leaders become coaches of other groups. This is intended to give leaders a network of support, encouragement, and a helpful resource to foster growth and multiplication.

The training program was periodically evaluated to insure the desired results were being achieved. Evaluations were held with the ministerial team, the church board, the youth leadership committee, and later the Growth Groups leadership team that was directly overseeing the program. Adjustments were made as they were deemed necessary.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

This project is limited to the study, implementation, and evaluation of small groups and its leadership. It is also limited to one specific church, the Westchester Seventh-day Adventist Church in Miami, Florida, United States of America. The time



frame for this study has been delimited to July 2008 to January 2011. The literature reviewed includes books, articles, and internet materials from many different Christian groups and denominations, including Adventists but not limited to it.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Cell church:* A church which has cell groups as its main and basic organizing structure. Each cell group ‘is’ the church.

*Cell groups:* “Cell groups . . . are small groups of people (between 5-15) which are intimately linked to the life of the church (Acts 2:46). These groups meet for the purpose of spiritual edification which overflows in the form of evangelistic outreach” (Comiskey, 1996, para. 19). It is crucial to point out that “the cell group is never seen as an isolated gathering of believers who have replaced the role of the local church” (para. 19).

*Small group DNA:* This refers to the key basic elements that contain the genetic instruction for heredity, reproduction, and well-functioning of the small group.

*Growth Group:* A group of people (3-14) who have decided to meet regularly and experience life together in the kingdom of God with the purposes of community, spiritual edification, missional outreach, and multiplication, and is the most basic building block of the local church.

*Holistic small groups:* The website of the North American Division Evangelism Institute of Seventh-day Adventists defines them as “disciple-making communities which endeavor to reach the unchurched, meet individual needs, develop each person according to their God-given gifts and raise leaders to sustain the growth of the church,” and which “are designed to grow and multiply” (NADEI, para. 1).

*House church:* It is a non-public private home that serves as the meeting place for believers and unbelievers alike, and where a small group of people seek an intimate relationship with God and others while living a kingdom lifestyle (Sanchez, 2006, p. 26).

*Small Group:* A group of people who meet regularly. Small groups can be holistic, task oriented, evangelistic, or take many other forms.

*Youth:* The Youth Ministry Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists states in their official website that they minister to people from the age of 6 to 31. For the purpose of this research it was chosen to use the term youth with the same broad spectrum to refer to people between the ages of 10 to 31.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND SMALL GROUPS

The current chapter studies the theological foundations for youth in leadership and small groups. The chapter is divided in three sections: (1) it analyzes main youth figures in the Bible from which key leadership insights are extracted; (2) it deals with the biblical foundations for small groups from the Old and New Testaments; and (3) it presents a study on Ellen G. White's view on youth ministry and ends with her views and recommendations on small groups.

#### **Youth Leaders in the Bible**

The whole Bible clearly describes the importance God gives to young people. Throughout sacred history God has placed great expectations and hopes in youth. Many were chosen to carry out functions and specific tasks crucial to God's redemptive work. In the following pages several selected youth stories are briefly analyzed in order to see why involving youth in ministry is crucial today for the advancement of God's mission and their own spiritual growth.

#### Samuel

The story of Samuel is full of significant details about youth involvement in ministry. It is crucial to note the role of his godly parents in his upbringing. Elkanah was

a devoted Levite who resided in Ephraim (1 Chr 6:26) and who yearly brought his whole family to worship God (1 Sam 1:3). Hannah was a woman of faith and strong convictions who believed God is not only real but who also answers prayers. She vowed to dedicate her son for life for God's service (1 Sam 1:11) if her request was granted. This she faithfully fulfilled when her son was weaned (1:22). Elwell (1988) points out that there seems to be three ingredients that prepared Samuel for his future service: "a feeling of worth, knowledge of his parents' love (cf. 2:19), and a sense of purpose" (p. 1890). This would help him in his ministry as judge, priest, and above all, a prominent prophet.

Related to the previous point is the integrity Samuel shows in the midst of a depraved environment. Eli's sons were not only abusing their priestly ministries (1 Sam 2:12-17) but also engaging in immoral practices with women who served God at the entrance of the tent of meeting (1 Sam 2:22). Their father and high priest, Eli, does not remove them from office or greatly interfere with their wickedness, but Samuel does not follow them in their evilness and serves instead the Lord (1 Sam 2:18, 26). As Samuel grows to be great in the sight of God and men, the sons of Eli also grow to become great in their sins (Arnold, 2003, p. 72).

What kind of early training and example must this boy have had in his upbringing that he could now resist and be strong in this wicked environment? It clearly shows the importance of godly parents who raise their children in the fear of the Lord.

According to Josephus, Samuel was twelve years old when God called him to service (Bergen, 1996, p. 86). This would make him a unique case for Levite service, because according to Num 8:24, he is not supposed to serve in the sanctuary until the appointed age of twenty five (later lowered to twenty in 2 Chr 31:17). This fact can only

be explained when taking into consideration Samuel's obedience, fervent service, and devotion to God; reasons for which he must have entered ministry prematurely. Age should never be in issue when youth want to serve God, devotion, willingness, and faithfulness is what needs to be valued.

Another key characteristic of young Samuel was his strong adherence to the Word of God. The Bible says that "he let none of his words fall to the ground" (1 Sam 3:19). This clearly speaks about how he "constantly acted according to divine directions" (Horn, 1979, p. 976), a distinctive characteristic that continues throughout his whole life (seen also in the severity against King Agag in 1 Sam 15:33). This kind of adherence to God's will is highly needed in our youth today, especially with those who will be leading small groups.

Through Samuel's ministry the spiritual life of the Israelites was improved, people and kings were challenged, and great victories achieved. People in his days respected him even when he was still young (1 Sam 3:20). He clearly deserves a place in the gallery of the men of faith (Heb 11:32). This kind of youth is what God longs for and wants to use in his service in redeeming the lost world.

### Josiah

One of the biggest differences between Samuel and Josiah's stories is the fact that while the former had godly parents who raised him in the ways of the Lord, the latter did not enjoy that blessing. On the contrary, Josiah's grandfather, Manasseh, was the wickedest king Judah ever had (2 Kgs 21), and his father Amon, in his short reign, followed the same path (2 Kgs 21:20-21). Josiah had to choose between neglecting his family's example or imitating his godly ancestor David.

Josiah became king at the early age of eight (2 Kgs 22:1) and showed devotion to God from the beginning of his reign, which probably denotes godly advisors or regents (Elwell, 1988, p. 1223).

The Bible declares that at the age of sixteen, “while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David” (2 Chr 34:3). This is a remarkable description of the spiritual hunger this teenager had for God.

When King Josiah was only 20 years of age he started a major reformation that mainly involved three elements of pagan worship: “the purge of the temple and its precincts, the destruction of the high places in Jerusalem and Judah, and the desecration of the sanctuaries in the old Northern kingdom (2 Kgs 23:4-20, 24)” (Althann, 1992, p. 1,016). He completely removed everything that had carried the people of Judah away from God. This becomes a key characteristic of Josiah; whatever he did he did it passionately and thoroughly.

When Josiah was 26, what we would consider a young adult in our days, he started the thorough restoration of the temple. In the process of this restoration an amazing and life changing discovery was made, namely the book of the law (2 Kgs 22:8). After hearing the words of the book of God, Josiah reacts with a responsive heart, humbling himself before God, tearing his robe, and weeping (2 Kgs 22:11, 19). This should have surprised many in his days, as it does today when youth surrender themselves when they are confronted with a clear “thus says the Lord.”

Josiah does not leave things undone or half way. He does everything in his power to change things and bring his people back to God. He consults Hulda, a prophetess from God (2 Kgs 22:13), calls together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem (2 Kgs 23:1),

assembles in the temple everyone regardless of their age, gender, or responsibility (v. 2), goes himself to the temple, reads to the people what the book says (v. 3), stands by the pillar and renews the covenant with God and asks the people to do the same (v. 3), orders the temple to be cleansed from all evil things (v. 4) removes all other pagan practices and offices (pagan priests, male prostitutes, mediums, spiritists, etc.), regardless of who instituted them. He finishes by calling the whole nation to celebrate the Passover and restore their commitment to the true and only God.

It is for this kind of commitment and passion in following God that the Bible summarizes the life of Josiah with these words: “Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the LORD as he did—with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses (2 Kgs 23:25, NIV).

God wants to take today’s youth, regardless of their uprising or social status or the sinful influences they may have had, and turn them into spiritual champions. God is looking for modern Josiah’s that will work to bring people back to God, to reform and renovate his church.

### Timothy

The figure of Timothy in the New Testament is another great example of what the youth can do for Christ. Timothy had been raised in a divided home, with a Jewish mother and a Greek father (Acts 16:1). Nonetheless, his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois had instructed him well and instilled in him a firm devotion for God (2 Tim 1:5).

It is crucial to point out Timothy’s relationship with the Word of God. Paul says that Timothy “from infancy” has “known the holy Scriptures” (2 Tim 3:15). Without a

doubt this is what has made Timothy a trusted worker and minister of the gospel. Small group leaders need also to understand the importance of studying and applying the Bible to their lives, because they will not be able to give what they do not have.

Even at his young age he already enjoyed a good reputation among the believers (Acts 16:2), most probably for living a godly life. Paul even calls him to live an example for others to follow (1 Tim 4:12). But as Paul had warned him, that “everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim 3:12), Timothy experienced hardships, opposition, and even imprisonment at least in one opportunity (Heb 13:23). Youth in our days also need to know that choosing to live for Christ and being faithful has a price to pay, but that it is well worth it.

Young Timothy also becomes an example in being willing to adapt, even to the point of being willing to be circumcised, in order to serve the gospel better and not be a stumbling block for anyone (Acts 16:3). He is also an example in dedicating his life completely to the gospel and being willing to live a life of hardships for the Lord’s sake (2 Tim 2:3).

Paul needs to be highlighted in the role he played as a mentor to young Timothy. In order to understand the relationship one only needs to see how Paul refers to Timothy: “my true son in the faith” (1 Tim 1:2), and “my dear son” (2 Tim 1:2), “my son whom I love” (1 Cor 4:17). Paul became Timothy’s teacher, mentor, and most probably a paternal figure (Krause, 2004, pp. 32-34). This relationship had probably started when Paul and Barnabas “met and converted him during their first missionary journey” (Gillman, 1992, 6:558) and grew with all the missionary trips they did together.

The mentoring role of Paul with Timothy can also be seen in the letters the



apostle sends to his apprentice. In them Paul urges Timothy to: “train yourself to be godly” (1 Tim 4:7); “do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord” (1:8); “be strong” (2:1); “endure hardship” (2:3); “entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” (2:2); “do your best to present yourself to God as one approved . . . and who correctly handles the word of truth” (2:15); “pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace” (2:22); “do not have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments” (2:23); “preach the Word” (4:2); and among many other things “do the work of an evangelist” (4:5).

Paul even gives some practical advice when he writes to him: “flee the evil desires of youth” (2 Tim 2:22) and to “stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses” (1 Tim 5:23). Paul almost seems to give Timothy a leadership and relationship seminar when he teaches him how to treat widows, women, youth, and the elderly with respect (1 Tim 5). Small group leaders can certainly learn from all these words of a veteran soldier of Christ. At the same time, let us not bypass the fact that young people desperately need godly Christian mentors who are willing to invest their time, resources, knowledge, and lives in them.

As it has been seen, God has always used young people for the advancement of his cause. Today’s church needs to be brave enough to allow godly youth to minister, lead, and finish God’s mission. It may seem too risky at some points, but history proves that it is well worth it.

### **Biblical Foundations for Small Groups**

Effective methods for small groups must be born and built from a correct theology. Before we launch into a small group ministry for the local church it is crucial to analyze the justification for such an endeavor. This is even more important today when

many members and some pastors question whether this emphasis on small groups is just another fad among Christian Churches. In reality, this is not even a paradigm shift; it is instead a recovery of God's plan for his people and the completion of the mission.

There seems to be an overarching principle running through the Old and New Testament concerning mission, and that is that mission is better fulfilled in community. It is not only that it gives better results but it seems to be the Designer's way of fulfilling the mission. Let us consider more indepth, God's foundations and principles for small group ministry.

### Foundations From the Old Testament

It is always better to start at the beginning, so our study needs to begin in Genesis 1:1 where "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (NIV). The Hebrew word utilized for God, *elohim* (אֱלֹהִים), is plural, which clearly indicates more than one person in the act of creation. The creation of the human race is then introduced in Genesis 1:26 when "God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness." (NIV). Again the same Hebrew plural word for God, but now God says "let us make" indicating again more than one involved in this creation, and adds "in our image, in our likeness," both plural again.

For Christians this is a clear indication that the whole Godhead, or Trinity, involving the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, was involved in the creation of Adam. Icenogle (1994) and other authors refer to the Trinity as the first small group or community (p. 14). On the same line, James argues that:

If God were ONE person, there could be POWER. If God were TWO persons, there could be LOVE. But God is THREE . . . and with the Trinity, there is now

COMMUNITY. COMMUNITY begins with THREE. God's nature is in essence relational. (James, slide 3:7)

This fact is reinforced by God's statement in Genesis 2:18, when he declares "The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Bilezikian (1997) argues that in creation "God's supreme achievement was community (p. 19). Humans were designed to be communal and enjoy true community.

Humans are indeed sociable beings who find fulfillment in meaningful relationships. The problem is that sin, over and over throughout history, has broken human relationships with God (Gen 3:8, 10), with other humans (Gen 3:12), and even with nature (Gen 3:13). As Icenogle (1994) describes "a survey of salvation history reveals the struggle of God and humanity to be in intimate relationship with one another" (p. 20). Therefore, a correct theology of small group needs to take into account the struggle between good and evil.

Groups should always remember that their primary reason for being is for "building relationships and accomplishing the mission" (Icenogle, 1994, p. 25).

There are several other key principles for small groups found in Exodus 18 with Jethro's invaluable counsel to Moses. First, small group leaders need to see how crucial it is to share responsibilities so everyone in their groups receives appropriate care. Cerna (1991) adds that "the Old Testament principle of organizing God's people into small groups, is logical. When a large group divides into smaller ones, each individual can receive better care and more personal attention from the group leaders and other members" (p. 21). Second, there is a need for leaders to look for emerging leaders and to give them responsibilities according to their capabilities. Lastly, group leaders need to be

willing and ready to give away their ministry, otherwise people will suffer, will not grow in leadership, and the leader could face burn out.

Organization is crucial for people's survival and to arrive at the desired destination. It is the leaders' responsibility to establish structures that will foster the accomplishment of the mission. Icenogle (1994) argues that "Jethro's was a strategy and structure for the decentralization of power" (p. 97), and not a call to establish a military-like system or a hierarchy of management. Small groups need careful organization and planning in order to give better use to God-given resources and complete the mission of reaching those around them.

Another story from the OT that gives good insight for small groups is when the Israelites were already inside the Promised Land, but had not conquered the rest of the territory. God summons Joshua with these words: "You are very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over" (NIV). Then God gives instructions to Joshua to divide and assign it to the different tribes (Josh 13:7, 8). There was unfinished work, and the Divine method to complete it was to divide and decentralize the responsibility by giving each tribe a specific task or territory to conquer. This principle is crucial for fulfilling the mission of making disciples. The church still needs to learn this valuable lesson of dividing the task among its lay people so the work can be completed.

Another lesson can be drawn from the story of Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. Having in front of them a paramount work to finish, Nehemiah divides the task, assigns it to small groups and families, and places these groups under supervision (Neh 3:5). Here people can not only see the importance of dividing the work, but also of organizing groups with people who already know each other, and the

advantage of having them work near their homes. Icenogle (1994) argues that Nehemiah shows ‘Macro Leadership,’ which is “leadership that is able to bring diverse people groups together and encourage each group to build out of the own sense of call, their unique commitments, their particular skills and their special tools” (Icenogle (1994, p. 107).

Small groups should invite people who know each other and who already have a relationship, to unite in order to work with those closer to them in making them disciples for Jesus. At the same time, Nehemiah places supervisors to help these groups move along and finish the work. From this story there is also a call for the coaching of small groups by more experienced leaders who can encourage and help them to achieve the goal.

Daniel and his three friends give the readers of the Bible another argument for small groups. Solomon said it well that “two are better than one” (Eccl 4:9) when facing problems, when resisting temptations, when there is a need to stand strong for God, when one falls or becomes cold, and overcoming the enemy. Small groups provide a safety and care network for all those in the group where they can find encouragement and help in time of need. At the same time, it is in these groups where Proverbs 27:17 can become a reality because “as iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another” (NIV). People grow better in community, especially when dealing with difficult, oversensitive, exasperating, or controlling people. There is room for growth in the interaction as people fall on their knees and adapt to solve the challenges.

Organizing small groups is not a newly discovered idea; it is God’s plan for his creatures in returning to authentic community while completing the given mission.

Having seen an overview on the OT principles for small groups let us move into the NT where the idea and practice of small groups is further developed.

### Foundations From the New Testament

The incarnation of Christ opens the door to a new era of small group ministry. Jesus becomes the supreme role model to imitate in forming, leading, and successfully multiplying a small group.

Jesus begins his public ministry by calling twelve men to become his disciples (Mark 3:13). Jesus' group is a model in bringing together real and ordinary men who needed a lot of adjustments. Jesus' group is a model in the way He made it a point to call out certain people for the specific purpose of discipleship and leadership (even they did not know it at that time). Being called is a privilege and also a great responsibility, and it gives the person the clear message that he/she is special, valued, that there is potential in him/her. The assurance of the call sustains as troubles mount and hopes seem to vanish. Potential small group leaders should always be called.

Mallison (1989) correctly asserts that Christ's key plan was a small group strategy (pp. 3, 4). He invested most of his time not in preaching to the Jewish multitudes, or in long and far away trips trying to convert the nations, but instead in training twelve people. It was deliberate. It was part of the plan; God's plan for reaching humanity.

When tracing the theological foundations of small groups one needs to also see the importance that Christ himself placed in the use of the household for the spreading of the good news into unreached places. Jesus modeled this kind of strategy (Mark 1:29-34; 2:1-2; John 4:4-42; 11:1-46; 12:1-11) and He later instructed his disciples to apply it (Luke 10:1-11). They were first to find a 'house of peace' which simply meant a

household that was sympathetic to Jesus and his message. Then they were to preach, teach, and heal all those who had some connection with that household (family, friends, and acquaintances). This household would then become the missional center of operations, from there the whole area was to be reached. Gehring (2004) presents a more indepth and scholarly study of Jesus' household strategy.

Jesus models a new way of living life and chooses to do it by living with the group of twelve. Icenogle (1994) says that "Jesus' model was a constant confrontation to their more limited and narrow view of life" and so their "understanding of reality . . . was confused, incomplete, narrow and myopic" (p. 145). Jesus' group was full of constant tensions, but He taught them how to live by calling them to "be with him" (Mark 3:14). Icenogle (1994) describes this group life they had with Jesus by saying that:

they shared every aspect of life, but had only Jesus in common. Jesus' personal presence and teaching moved them to live together in ways not prevalent to the world in which they lived. Jesus called the women to live in dignity and self-awareness. He showed the men how to treat the women with respect. The women were free to support the men financially (Lk 8:3). The men were free to learn new ways of relating to women. Both groups were called to experience life from God's viewpoint, as part of the kingdom. (p. 142)

Small groups today need to learn and teach how to do the new life Jesus calls his disciples to live. This way of living in the kingdom, is clearly more caught than taught.

It is this new kind of living, where people see real love acted out, that will attract unbelievers into Christ. Christ sends his disciples "into the world" (John 17:18), asking the Father not to "take them out of the world" (John 17:15), so all the believers "may be one" (v. 21) and as a consequence "the world may believe" (v. 21). This kind of relationship among believers is the ultimate apologetic for Christianity.

Jesus is also a model in character development teaching people that growth happens better in community and not in isolation. Burrill (1997) adds that:

The purpose of groups is to give Christians a place where they can grow together. If intellectual knowledge alone is being attained from Bible study, then the small group is a failure, because its true purpose is spiritual growth, not intellectual attainment. (p. 54)

After receiving training and spending time with the Lord, the disciples were sent out in groups of twos on their first missionary trip. Here lies another crucial lesson for groups, especially for small group leadership. No disciple should go alone to lead a small group or to reach others. Burrill (1997) says, “He sent them forth in pairs, two by two, for only community can create other communities. Single ministers create individualistic Christians who do not live in community because their mentor did not evangelize them in community” (p. 49).

Greggo (2008) mentions that John Wesley found biblical foundation for his groups in James 5:16. He believed the best place where Christians could keep each other accountable and grow in holiness towards healing was in the small groups. Greggo (2008) adds, “The ingredients of mutual confession, individually targeted prayer and realized healing from the effects of sin were carved into the procedures Wesley authored and circulated to guide the advancement of bands (pp. 62, 63).

The life and ministry of Jesus also teaches about the importance of the ministry of all believers. Icenogle (1994) adds that “small groups are the microcosm of humanity’s call to minister together as community. Community establishes the foundation for mutual service. Where there is no community, there is no ministry. Where there is no ministry, there is no community” (p. 105). This is, in essence, the priesthood of all believers, but



one should never forget that “people cannot be priests apart from the community they serve” (Burrill, 1997, p. 52).

The NT abounds with references to the responsibility of one Christian for another. These are called the “one another” passages. The small group is the best place for people to come out of their individualistic and self-centered living (so common in North America). The list of “one another” passages serves as a clear job description of what a real small group is called to do.

The stories of the Samaritan woman (John 4) and the Gadarene demoniac (Matt 8) teaches another important principle for small groups and evangelism: the best field in which to witness is in our circle of influence. It is crucial that small groups work within their circle of influence -- with those who they know and with who knows them. This allows them to see where they are coming from, examine the radical change that they have gone through, and create the desire to know and embrace the power that operates such transformation.

Another key element in small groups is the assurance that the founder gave about his presence: “For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them” (Matt 18:20). In the community of the small group, Emmanuel, God with us, will manifest himself. The group will learn firsthand about the reality of the immanence of God. Small groups must believe it, expect it, honor it, and above all, enjoy it.

There are two NT analogies that bring light into the small group dynamics: the body analogy, and the family analogy. Paul presents the body analogy in three major passages (Eph 4; Rom 12; 1 Cor 12-14), and in each of them He insists on the role each member plays in the body with their unique spiritual gifts. Early Christians were able to

use their gifts in the context of the small group that met in homes. In that context Paul could say, “When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification” (NIV).

Edification is the ultimate goal of spiritual gifts and the work of the body.

The second powerful analogy that brings light into our modern small groups is the figure of the family. Jesus’ new community had to be different because he was creating after all a new Israel. Icenogle (1994) explains:

The original twelve were the twelve sons of Jacob—a family. Jesus called the new twelve to be a new family. The ancient family of Jacob demonstrated significant sexual and spiritual brokenness: selling their brother into slavery and massacring whole villages of vulnerable people. The new family of Jesus was called away from such a destructive life pattern. They were to be the family of the reconciled as well as the reconciling family. They had to be small and they had to be unique (separate) to Christ. (p. 207)

Furthermore, Jesus explained that in this new family “whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother” (Matt 12:50, NIV). The terms brothers and sisters transcends the regular bonds of natural blood and reach into the new community formed by those redeemed by his own blood. Small groups are the best place to become these kinds of families.

Lastly, there is an eschatological call for small groups in the book of Hebrews that cannot be neglected. Paul calls his readers to “not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing . . . and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb 10:25, NIV). Since in those days Christianity was illegal and Christians did not have dedicated temples to meet in, this is certainly a call to keep meeting in small groups in people’s homes. As Adventists we know we are living in the time of the end, and as the day of

Christ's second coming approaches, we would do well to revive the practice of meeting in small groups for the purpose of sharing Christ and edification.

### **Youth and Small Groups in the Writings of Ellen G. White**

For Seventh-day Adventists, Ellen G. White is not only one of the co-founders of the denomination but also an especial messenger from God, with prophetic words of advice for the last days of this world's history. For that reason it is crucial to see what White said about youth and small groups.

#### **Ellen G. White and Youth**

White found Christ and gave her life to God when she was only a teenager. She knew by her own experience what a consecrated youth can do in the hands of God. She wrote in 1902 that "the Lord has appointed the youth to be His helping hand" (1902a). God is eager to see his church using young people for his service. Amazing things will happen when young people understand and fulfill their divine call.

White (1915) argued that the church highly needed the youth when she stated "youthful talent, well organized and well trained, is needed in our churches" (p. 211). White (1913/1943) goes even further in claiming that what is needed is the energy, vigor, and freshness of committed youth. She said:

In order that the work may go forward in all its branches, God calls for youthful vigor, zeal, and courage. He has chosen the youth to aid in the advancement of His cause. To plan with clear mind and execute with courageous hand demands fresh, uncrippled energies. Young men and women are invited to give God the strength of their youth, that through the exercise of their powers, through keen thought and vigorous action, they may bring glory to Him and salvation to their fellow men. (p. 535)

While Adventism in North America continues to contemplate the graying of the church, White reminds people that the youth are an essential force in making church relevant for today's world.

Furthermore, White (1915) pointed out that our young people will find something to do "with their overflowing energies. Unless these energies are directed into right channels, they will be used by the youth in a way that will hurt their own spirituality, and prove an injury to those with whom they associate" (p. 211). It is time to stop thinking of our youth as a liability, and begin seeing them as a great asset for today's church.

The youth and children need to know that they are important to God and his church, and that they can work for the Lord regardless of their age. White in 1893 described this need by saying:

Let not the youth be ignored; let them share in the labor and responsibility. Let them feel that they have a part to act in helping and blessing others. Even the children should be taught to do little errands of love and mercy for those less fortunate than themselves. (para. 3)

At the same time youth need to be involved in Christian ministry because the present and future Church depends on them. Our youth are the ones who will take the leadership positions and carry it to completion. White in 1915 stressed this fact when she wrote:

The burden-bearers among us are falling in death. Many of those who have been foremost in carrying out the reforms instituted by us as a people, are now past the meridian of life, and are declining in physical and mental strength. With the deepest concern the question may be asked, Who will fill their places? To whom are to be committed the vital interests of the church when the present standard-bearers fall? We cannot but look anxiously upon the youth of today as those who must take these burdens, and upon whom responsibilities must fall. These must take up the work where others leave it, and their course will determine whether morality, religion, and vital godliness shall prevail, or whether immorality and infidelity shall corrupt and blight all that is valuable. (p. 68)

White (1913/1943) also adds that “the youth must soon bear the burdens that older workers are now carrying. We have lost time in neglecting to give young men a solid, practical education” (p. 537). And again, “Never before was there so much at stake; never were there results so mighty depending upon a generation as upon these now coming upon the stage of action” (p. 536).

The potential that lies within the youth in reaching the world for Christ is brightly presented when she wrote (1903/1952), “With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world!” (p. 271). Again she (1893) emphasized the possibilities by saying that “we have an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged” (White, 1983, p. 30). The prospective outcomes of the work the youth can do are weighted when she wrote (1974):

Educate the youth to help the youth; and in seeking to do this work each will gain experience that will qualify him to become a consecrated worker in a larger sphere. Thousands of hearts can be reached in the most simple way. (p. 443)

So far it has been seen why it is so crucial to involve youth in Christian ministry. Let us now analyze what White understood needed to be done with the youth in order for them to be ready for this labor.

First of all, she felt the urge to remind today’s church leaders of the need to meet the youth where they are, to sympathize and to be patient with them. Certainly in working with youth a correct attitude and an understanding heart are crucial. This is also called incarnational youth ministry. She brilliantly described it with the following words (1915):

We should seek to enter into the feelings of the youth, to sympathize with them in their joys and sorrows, their conflicts and victories. Jesus did not remain in heaven, away from the sorrowing and sinful, but he came down to this world that he might become acquainted with the weakness, the suffering and temptations, of the fallen

race. He reached us where we were, that he might lift us up. Such should be our work. We must come to the youth where they are, and make their case our own, if we would benefit them. If these youthful disciples are overcome by temptation, I hope that you who are older in experience will not deal with them harshly, or regard their efforts with indifference. Remember that you, yourselves, have shown but little strength to resist the tempter's power. Be as patient with these lambs of the flock as you wish others to be with you. God has so constituted us that even the strongest desire sympathy. How much more, then, do children need it. Even a look of compassion will often soothe and strengthen the tried and tempted child. (p. 407)

The first thing young people need to be taught is how to have an intimate connection with the only source of real power. She stated in 1901:

Follow on, young men, to know the Lord, and you will know that 'His going forth is prepared as the morning.' Seek constantly to improve. Strive earnestly for identity with the Redeemer. Live by faith in Christ. . . . A close connection with Him who offered Himself as a sacrifice to save a perishing world, will make you acceptable workers. (p. 416)

She very strongly warns everyone that without such a vital connection with Christ, no one will be able to work for God. She argues that (1896/1956):

without a living faith in Christ as a personal Saviour it is impossible to make our influence felt in a skeptical world. We cannot give to others that which we do not ourselves possess. It is in proportion to our own devotion and consecration to Christ that we exert an influence for the blessing and uplifting of mankind. If there is no actual service, no genuine love, no reality of experience, there is no power to help, no connection with heaven, no savor of Christ in the life. (p. 37)

The Adventist youth have for too long received a menu consisting mainly of events, activities, and entertainment; perhaps inadvertently, a model that has been copied from other Christian churches. It is time to train them in the right skills, those that will help them build spiritual muscles. Young people are eager to be "rightly trained" (White, 1903/1952, p. 271) for real Christian service.

White in 1893 already saw the need to train the youth and wrote about the areas in which they needed to be developed: "Let all be so trained that they may rightly represent the truth, giving the reason of the hope that is within them, and honoring God in any

branch of the work where they are qualified to labor” (1925, p. 30). She especially marks the need to teach the youth to win souls. White, time after time, called for this kind of training, and took it even further in asking to train them to win their friends. She penned in 1915:

When the youth give their hearts to God, our responsibility for them does not cease. They must be interested in the Lord’s work, and led to see that He expects them to do something to advance His cause. It is not enough to show how much needs to be done, and to urge the youth to act a part. They must be taught how to labor for the Master. They must be trained, disciplined, drilled, in the best methods of winning souls to Christ. Teach them to try in a quiet, unpretending way to help their young companions. Let different branches of missionary effort be systematically laid out, in which they may take part, and let them be given instruction and help. Thus they will learn to work for God. (p. 210)

It is crucial to reiterate that for White, youth needed to be trained in how to reach their own. She believed “we should educate the youth to help the youth; and as they seek to do this work, they will gain an experience that will qualify them to become consecrated workers in a larger sphere” (1915, p. 212). And as a reminder, she added “thousands of hearts can be reached in the most simple, humble way” (1915, p. 212). And while addressing the need to work in cities, she also advocated for the training of youth to reach their neighbors. She stated in 1909:

Young men and women should be educated to become workers in their own neighborhoods and in other places. Let all set their hearts and minds to become intelligent in regard to the work for this time, qualifying themselves to do that for which they are best adapted. (p. 118, 119)

White not only advocated for young people to be “rightly trained” but furthermore, to be guided and led in such a way so they would have greater results. She asked for planned efforts that will have order when she wrote (1894): “Let young men and women and children go to work in the name of Jesus. Let them unite together upon some plan and order of action.” Consider also the following statement published in 1893

where she calls for direction, encouragement, and well organized plans in which to involve the youth:

We have an army of youth today who can do much if they are properly directed and encouraged. We want our children to believe the truth. We want them to be blessed of God. We want them to act a part in well-organized plans for helping other youth. Let all be so trained that they may rightly represent the truth, giving the reason of the hope that is within them, and honoring God in any branch of the work where they are qualified to labor. (1893)

Often young people are not trusted, especially when they come with new ideas that might change the way things are done. White suggested (1883) that:

We must manifest confidence in our young men. They should be pioneers in every enterprise involving toil and sacrifice, while the overtaxed servants of Christ should be cherished as counselors, to encourage and bless those who strike the heaviest blows for God.

Lastly, there are still a couple questions that need to be addressed before the end of this first section on youth. The first question is: What kind of youth should be trained for such kind of service? And the second: What characteristics should the trainer of this youth have? White (1915) argues that people who work with youth need to be filled with love, sympathy, willing to adapt to each youth, and pray for wisdom to deal with their minds (p. 208). She concludes that the youth “need painstaking, prayerful, careful labor” (p. 208). White also warns about whom the church should choose for training when she writes that “often those whom we pass by with indifference, because we judge them from outward appearance, have in them the best material for workers, and will repay all the efforts bestowed on them” (p. 208).

In the light of everything that has been presented; I strongly believe that a strong small group leadership development program is the best way to train youth to be successful in reaching their friends and neighbors for Christ. This would also prove to be



the best way to keep them committed and faithful to God. For that reason, the following pages deal with White's counsel on small groups.

### Ellen G. White and Small Groups

In this section, White's counsel on small groups is examined to see if she saw the need of forming them, and for what specific purposes. It will also show what groups are supposed to do in their group life and meetings. At the same time, it will also discuss who should do groups, the place, time of meeting, benefits, dangers of not having groups, leadership, training of leaders, and keys to success.

First of all, a clarification on the use White makes of the name small groups. In her days, groups received different names, so at different points she calls them "small companies," "bands of workers," and also small groups. I believe that in general the name "social meetings" used in early Adventism does not correspond to the modern understanding of small groups (reasons include: the number of people that met, 10-100; place of meeting, church; program followed). Social meetings were more similar to our prayer meetings but they did have key social elements similar to small groups that will be discussed in the following chapter.

White was a Methodist and as such she was familiar with the Methodist use of small groups or 'bands' started by John Wesley. Most probably she had participated in some kind of group as she was growing up.

Between the years 1891 and 1900, White was sent to Australia to assist in the establishment of the church and the formation of Avondale College. While living there she had the opportunity to experience firsthand the Welsh Revival. It began with the clergy in Melbourne and had extended to the members. According to Johnson (1997) the

revival had, at the time of its peak, around 2,000 groups meeting in homes (pp. 62, 63).

At the same time, God emphasized to White the importance of small groups. Right after that period in Australia she wrote in 1902 what has become the best definition of small groups from her pen.

The formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort has been presented to me by One who cannot err. If there is a large number in the church, let the members be formed into small companies, to work not only for the church members, but for unbelievers. If in one place there are only two or three who know the truth, let them form themselves into a band of workers. Let them keep their bond of union unbroken, pressing together in love and unity, encouraging one another to advance, each gaining courage and strength from the assistance of the others. Let them reveal Christlike forbearance and patience, speaking no hasty words, using the talent of speech to build one another up in the most holy faith. Let them labor in Christlike love for those outside the fold, forgetting self in their endeavor to help others. As they work and pray in Christ's name, their numbers will increase; for the Saviour says: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven." Matthew 18:19. (1902a, pp. 21, 22)

The validity of having small groups in the Seventh-day Adventist church should be settled with the above quotation, knowing that it comes directly from God, the "One who cannot err." At the same time she clearly states that small groups are not just a fad or simply another program to add to keep churches busy, but instead the "basis of Christian effort." Burrill (1997) elaborates on this phrase and believes that:

To Ellen White, small groups were not just a program of the church, they were the major organizing principle of the work of the church. To have a church without small groups operating in it was anathema to Ellen White, for the church is to be built in small groups. (p. 137)

White certainly seems to reinforce the idea of the centrality of small groups for she wrote in 1895 that "God's work is to be done in his way and his Spirit" (para. 5). God's church cannot afford to keep trying and wasting resources instead of putting in practice what has been already revealed. She continues (1895a) in the same statement presenting that "in various places small companies are to consecrate themselves to God,

body, soul, and spirit; and laying hold of the throne of God by faith they are to work zealously, keeping their souls in the love of God” (para. 5). God requires nothing less than total consecration; only by fulfilling this requisite can the church expect success in doing small groups. She ends this quotation by assuring that when the church and the groups work under the banners of total commitment and love, then “the vital current of his love will make itself felt, and will be recognized as from heaven in the good works of his people (para. 5).

White urged believers to have groups for the salvation of the lost. She again insisted (1902a) that “in our churches let companies be formed for service. Let different ones unite in labor as fishers of men. Let them seek to gather souls from the corruption of the world into the saving purity of Christ’s love” (1902a, p. 21). Regardless of how many members are there, even if only two or three, the objective is the same; they should “meet together and plead with God for the salvation of some special one, and then for still another?” (1902a, p.21). It is clear, for Ellen White, the primary reason for groups is outreach.

Along with calling groups to exist for evangelism purposes White presents the need of having groups also for the purpose of community. For that reason the group needs to be more than a 90-minute meeting held once a week to experience real group life, or life as a group. Her advice on what a group should do in order to have real group life can be more clearly seen in the following statement:

Let them keep their bond of union unbroken, pressing together in love and unity, encouraging one another to advance, each gaining courage and strength from the assistance of the others. Let them reveal Christlike forbearance and patience, speaking no hasty words, using the talent of speech to build one another up in the most holy faith. Let them labor in Christlike love for those outside the fold, forgetting self in their endeavor to help others. (1902a, p. 195)

What she wrote will not happen if the groups meet only for a couple hours a week. What she is asking for this group of people is to be committed to a life of communion, encouragement, assistance, love, patience, discipling, help, and accountability.

According to White small groups ought also to “be formed for service. In the Lord’s work there are to be no idlers” (1902c, para. 19). And she adds that “small companies are to go forth to do the work to which Christ appointed His disciples. . . . They can visit the sick, praying with them and, if need be, treating them, not with medicines but with the remedies provided in nature” (1912, para. 13). The groups she calls the church to have are holistic groups, which uses the gifts God has given to believers to bless and help others. Her call is, in essence, the application of the priesthood of all believers. Johnson (1997) believes that White’s “comments concerning small groups life reflect very closely the elements of Acts 2:42-47: doctrinal study, home fellowship, prayer, food, and outreach” (p. 64).

For White, the size of the church is not an impediment for doing groups. She insists (1902a) that “if there is a large number in the church, let the members be formed into small companies,” and also, “if in one place there are only two or three who know the truth, let them form themselves into a band of workers” ( p. 22).

It is crucial also for this study to highlight the role White thought young people should have in working together in groups. The following quote written in 1894 while she was still in Australia emphasizes what youth can and should do in reaching others through small groups. She states:

“And they that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever.” There are many Christian

youth that can do a good work if they will learn lessons in the school of Christ from the great Teacher. Even though pastors, evangelists, and teachers should neglect the seeking of the lost, let not the children and youth neglect to be doers of the word. The lesson of Christ in this scripture is to be received and believed and acted upon in living faith. Let young men, and women, and children go to work in the name of Jesus. Let them unite together upon some plan and order of action. Cannot you form a band of workers, and have set times to pray together and ask the Lord to give you his grace, and put forth united action? You should consult with men who love and fear God, and who have experience in the work, that under the movings of the Spirit of God, you may form plans and develop methods by which you may work in earnest and for certain results. The Lord will help those who will use their God-intrusted capabilities to his name's glory. Will our young men and young women who believe the truth, become living missionaries? (1894, para. 3)

From the above quote it is obvious she calls young people to unite in small groups, make plans, develop methods, pray, and “work in earnest for certain results” (a probable call for goals of multiplication of disciples and groups) .

Concerning the most appropriate time for groups to meet, White talked about the need to have small groups meet at different times throughout the day. She stated, “Let small companies assemble in the evening, at noon, or in the early morning to study the Bible” (1902a, p. 195). Burrill (1997) concludes that “she envisioned these small group companies meeting at different times in the day, rather than all at once” (p. 135).

White also gave advice about the places where groups could meet. For her, believers need to adapt to unbelievers and meet them where they are knowing that this would prove to be the most successful method. She wrote in 1915:

The presentation of Christ, in the family, by the fireside, and in small gatherings in private houses, is often more successful in securing souls to Jesus than are sermons delivered in the open air, to the moving throng, or even in halls or churches. (pp. 340, 341)

She also advised believers to use their homes while trying to reach their friends and promises Jesus’ presence. She explained in 1905:

Invite your neighbors to your home, and read with them from the precious Bible and from books that explain its truths. Invite them to unite with you in song and prayer. In these little gatherings, Christ Himself will be present, as He has promised, and hearts will be touched by His grace. (p. 152, 153)

For White there are many benefits, and also promises from God for those having groups. She mentions some: numerical growth (1902a, p. 21); strength, enlightenment, and sanctification (1902a, p. 195); great blessings (1902a, p. 195); angels will be present (1902a, p. 195); Christ himself will be there (1902a, p. 195); “you will feed upon the leaves of the tree of life” (1902a, p. 195); Christ will be received in hearts (1902a, p. 195); people will maintain integrity (1902a, p. 195); “and hearts will be touched by His grace” (1905, p. 152); spiritual, mental, and physical powers will grow (1895b, para. 11); “will receive spiritual sinew and muscle” (1979, p. 11); “will gain much” (1979, p. 11); “a most precious reward” (1979, p. 11); “He will acknowledge you and me, gladly, heartily, joyously, before His heavenly Father” (1979, p. 11); “you will behold His glory” (1979, p. 11); God “will crown with success every humble effort made in His name” (1915, p. 192); revival (1903, para. 15); a way will be “opened for light to shine forth from the Word of God” (1903, para. 15); and churches will encourage their pastors to reach the lost (1895a, para. 5-7).

White also mentions that there are dangers in not participating in small groups. While addressing the importance of the ‘social meetings’, she gives a valuable recommendation for small groups. She says:

Let everyone consider the value of the social meetings, and let not large or small companies of believers think that they cannot have an enjoyable season unless they are entertained by a preacher. Where this dependence on the minister exists, the people fail to obtain that vigorous religious experience which they so much need wherever their lot may be cast. If the minister alone does all the witnessing, then those who have newly come to the faith become dwarfed and sickly for lack of opportunity to use their spiritual muscle. They have need to learn how to testify, how

to pray, how to sing, to the glory of God: but failing to do this, they have only a one-sided experience. The children of God are to grow up to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. They are to be faithful in their service to God. They are to learn the trade of being spiritual worshipers of God, and it is only by practice that we learn to speak and pray to the edification of those who listen. (1895b, para. 11)

Success in small groups, for White, is not tied to the amount of information shared or the ability of the leaders. Instead it is strictly dependent on relational efforts. She explains that “by being social and coming close to the people, you may turn the current of their thoughts more readily than by the most able discourse” (1915, p. 193). She also adds:

Your success will not depend so much upon your knowledge and accomplishments, as upon your ability to find your way to the heart. By being social and coming close to the people, you may turn the current of their thoughts more readily than by the most able discourses. (1915, p. 340)

Leadership of small groups is also addressed by White indirectly when she explains how Jesus sent the 12 disciples to do their evangelistic work. She advocates for people not to work alone, and urges them to see the advantage of sending leaders out in twos in our days. This can be easily done by having co-leaders for groups. She wrote in 1898:

Calling the twelve about Him, Jesus bade them go out two and two through the towns and villages. None were sent forth alone, but brother was associated with brother, friend with friend. Thus they could help and encourage each other, counseling and praying together, each one's strength supplementing the other's weakness. In the same manner He afterward sent forth the seventy. It was the Saviour's purpose that the messengers of the gospel should be associated in this way. In our own time evangelistic work would be far more successful if this example were more closely followed. (p. 350)

In finalizing the study of White on small groups, there is one more thing to emphasize. She stresses very clearly that the creation of small groups as the basis for Christian ministry is an urgent need that should not be delayed any longer. Her words, written in 1891, leave no place for doubt or place for speculation:

Let there be in every church well-organized companies of workers to labor in the vicinity of that church. Put self behind you, and let Christ go before as your life and power. Let this work be entered into without delay, and the truth will be as leaven in the earth. When such forces are set to work in all our churches, there will be a renovating, reforming, energizing power in the churches, because the members are doing the very work that God has given them to do. (para. 12)

It is absolutely obvious that for White the creation of small groups is crucial for the church to finish the work assigned by God. For her this would prove to be the best way to mobilize the whole church for outreach, while keeping members united and strong in the faith.

### **Summary**

In summary, the first section of the chapter with the study of youth leaders in the Bible brought to light the great possibilities youth have in serving God in leadership. It highlighted some of the key qualifications youth need to have to better serve God. It was also clearly seen how crucial it is for youth to have godly mentors who would be willing to invest their time and resources to help them grow, mature, and fulfill God's purpose for their lives.

Through the analysis of the Old and New Testament, key ingredients of the possibilities and advantages of working with small groups emerged. From Moses to Joshua, through Nehemiah, and ending with the supreme role model of Jesus, the message was clear that dividing people in small groups greatly helps in successfully caring for people, training leaders, and completing the mission.

It was also seen in this chapter how White thought and taught throughout her life the importance of involving youth in ministry. For her, involving the youth, was not something to be considered optional, but a crucial need to stronger leadership and the finishing of the work. At the same time, she clearly and undisputedly presents the need of



having the work with small groups as the basis of the church's efforts in the last days.

Her counsel alone should clear all doubts and encourage today's churches to make small groups the central organizing principle for the Christian work and mission.

Finally, it was discovered that it is crucial to thoroughly train the youth in leadership. For this reason special attention needs to be placed, first, on the sharing of information with them, the knowledge part which is necessary. Second, becoming the leader God wants them to be, because they cannot export what they do not have. And third, in acquiring the much needed leadership skills so they can lead successful groups.

## CHAPTER 3

### DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL GROUP LEADERS:

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter first analyzes the development of small groups in church history, and second, the different models for small groups found in current literature. In the first section the areas studied are: small groups in the Old Testament; small groups during the exile; small groups in the New Testament; in Early Church History; during the Pre-Reformation; during the Reformation; after the Reformation, and ends with lessons from history.

#### **Small Groups in Church History**

Small groups are not a new idea and the Bible clearly states that “there is nothing new under the sun” (Eccl 1:9, NIV). Godly men and women throughout history have discovered and applied timeless principles of small groups. This section analyzes the influences that shaped church practices, especially those that concern small groups.

#### **Small Groups in the Old Testament**

The history of God’s people presents different opportunities to see how the Lord chooses to work in bringing restoration and salvation. Before jumping in, there needs to be a word of caution. Some authors have tried to read Old Testament history through the lenses of small groups and have come very close of doing ‘*eisegesis*’, namely, reading

into the text their own ideas. There are, though, a couple stories that require attention and from which small groups can learn.

The first is related to Moses, the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt and getting them into Canaan. Even though Moses had been divinely chosen to lead the Israelites he was still functioning under an Egyptian and Pharaonic style of leadership. The Egyptian style can be described as a pyramid where the person on top has all power and control (Burrill, 1997). Jethro comes and sees the problem (Exod 18:17, 18) and urges Moses to adopt a different model (vv. 21-23), one in which Moses was to give the power away by empowering his people. This style of leadership would be better compared with a circle where people share leadership and responsibilities. The plan involved the selection of capable people who would fear God, be trustworthy, honest, wise, respected, impartial, and not afraid of men (Exod 18:21; Deut 1:13-17). These leaders were given authority and entrusted with the responsibility to take care of groups of people under them. The most basic leader had ten people under them, but there were also leaders of fifties, hundreds, and thousands (Exod 18.21). Each leader had leaders above them to whom they were accountable and who would also take care of them. This decentralized system of organization and administration divided in small groups allowed the people of Israel to function and care for people's needs better.

Jethro's model is a good model for church leadership and care of its members. In this model no one stands alone, and everyone has someone to go to in case of need. In this way "my' problem then becomes the problem of the community, as we recognize that we are all in this together" (Burrill, 1997, p. 42).

Even though this is not a clear and exact model of small groups and the

multiplication of them, it does serve to see the necessary qualities of the leaders of groups, the need of coaching and supervision of the leaders and their groups, the different levels of leadership to assure pastoral care, and the approximate size groups should have.

Another case for small groups can be made from Daniel and his companions in the Babylonian royal court. Even though these four young people had been taken as captives they had resolved to maintain themselves pure and committed to the true God (Dan 1:8). This group of four decided to be faithful (1:8), to be tried (1:12, 13), to work together (1:19; 2:49), to share their challenges (2:18), to pray together (2:18), and praise God for what they had asked (2:23). As a consequence they receive knowledge and understanding from God (1:17; 2:19) and recognition from the king (1:19, 20; 2:48, 49).

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah became not only a support group but companions in trials, prayer, and promotions. They became close friends and shared life together. This provides a good example of what a small group should ultimately be for people. Groups are more than a 90-minute meeting once a week, it is instead about doing life together, becoming a family, and fulfilling the mission that God has given.

#### Small Groups During the Exile—*Bethakeneset*

After the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. the Jewish people found themselves with the need of a place to worship God. Many sources point to this need as the time of origin for the Jewish synagogue (Elwell, 1986; Horn, 1979; Myers, 1987). The Hebrew word for this ‘house of assembly’ is *Bethakeneset* (Millgram, 1971). Whether in Jerusalem or Babylon, people felt the need to meet to worship, teach the Law and the Prophets, and pray.

At the same time, Millgram (1971) argues that other scholars think it existed even before the exile. Millgram goes on to explain that there is no consensus on where the synagogues really started because some locate it in Babylon while others in Jerusalem with good arguments for both sides.

The case for Jewish pre-exilic houses of meeting and prayer is made from Psalms 74:7-9. Weingreen (1976) argues that in verse 7 the poet refers to the destruction of the Sanctuary in 586 B.C., but then in verse 8 the psalmist adds that “they burned every place where God was worshiped in the land” (NIV). The Hebrew word used here is *moed* which the Revised Standard Version translated as ‘meeting places of God’ and the New English Bible as ‘God’s holy places’. Since this cannot be a reference to pagan worship (which the prophets condemned and Josiah’s reform in 61 B.C. suppressed), Weingreen concludes that this is then a clear indication of some kind of religious meeting places before the exile in Judea which the Jews took with them when they went into the Babylonian exile (1976, p. 128).

The Jewish tradition has the prophet Ezekiel as the founder or motivator of these houses of worship (Horn, p. 1078). These houses of prayer (synagogues) became the center of Jewish worship, learning, and community in later years.

Ten adult males to constitute the rulers or board of elders were needed in order to initiate a synagogue (Horn, 1979). Synagogues became very popular and by the time of the apostles every major city in the Roman Empire (Jerusalem, Acts 6:9; Damascus, Acts 9:2; Cyprus, Acts 13:5; the Roman province of Galatia, Acts 13,14; 14:1; Macedonia and Greece, Acts 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4; Ephesus in Asia, Acts 19:8) seemed to have one, a fact also supported by Acts 15:21 (Elwell, 1986). In Jerusalem alone and before the

destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, there were 394 synagogues functioning (Millgram, 1971, p. 76).

It is crucial to note that these house meetings were not led by the priests as it was the case in the temple, but by Jewish laymen (Horn, 1979; Myers, 1987). They were not meant to replace the temple services and worship, but to serve as a place of instruction. Myers and Elwell argue that the synagogues also had judicial functions (Myers, 1987; Elwell, 1986) where offenders could be in extreme circumstances excommunicated (John 9:22, 34, 35; 12:42) or even scourged (as was the case of Paul in 2 Cor 11:24).

According to the Mishna, the liturgy followed in the synagogues involved the confession of faith with the *Shema* (Deut 6:4-9); prayer; Scripture reading (mainly the Law in a three-year cycle, but also the Prophets; interpretation (which could include translation to a more understood language); a brief sermon or address (which Jesus and Paul used to preach while visiting synagogues); and the blessing (Elwell, 1986).

The synagogues had mainly two officers, the ‘ruler’ of the synagogue who was in charge of organizing the services and the ‘*chazzan*’ (somehow similar to a deacon) who performed more menial tasks which included, in some circumstances, “inflicting corporal punishment” (Horn, p. 1078).

Many of these synagogues started in the simple houses of believers. Later, synagogues became stand-alone worship buildings with more elaborated architecture, furniture, and liturgy (Bradshaw, 1991).

Even though there are big differences between the synagogues and our modern small groups, there are some similarities worth noting: they were both led by laymen, had a clear leadership team, met in houses, fostered accountability/discipline, could be

multiplied very easily, and had the capability of sustaining the religious community in times of great challenges.

### Small Groups in the New Testament

When God sends his Son into the world a new era begins for the history and salvation of humanity. At the same time, God provided his people with a superior method for advancing his kingdom, building community, and caring for their needs. Jesus becomes the supreme role model of the small group movement with the calling of the twelve. Later on, his followers would also form their own groups in order to fulfill the mission of making more disciples.

### **Jesus and Small Groups**

Soon after his baptism, Jesus began to call sympathizers to become his disciples. Instead of trying to reach the multitudes by himself, he spent the three and a half years of his earthly ministry training this group of twelve disciples. Mallison argues that “the genius of Christ’s ministry was that he devoted primarily to a few people rather than the masses, in order that the masses could be more effectively reached with the gospel” (1989, p. 3).

The disciples that Jesus chose represented a paramount challenge to build community. Consider that these men, most probably would never even dare to speak to each other because they came from very different backgrounds, interests, training, and economic positions (Neighbour, 2000). It is also evident that the chosen ones were far from perfect. Burrill argues that the “twelve had come from all kinds of dysfunctional groups and families” (1997, p. 47).

Regardless of all these circumstances Christ not only chose them for His small group, but he chose to spend all his time traveling with them, teaching them, and helping them to become a community of believers, the kingdom of God on earth. Icenogle adds that “the small community who gathered with Jesus in their midst was the visible ‘kingdom’ on earth (1994, p. 117).

Another historical fact is Jesus’ use of houses. Jesus himself went from house-to-house preaching the good news of the kingdom (Matt 8:14-15; 13:36-43; 13:44-52; 17:25-27, Mark 2:1-5; 2:15-17; 9:33-50; Luke 8:51-56; John 12:1-3). And later on, when Jesus instructed the twelve on how to proceed in the first missionary trip, He also sent them to enter homes, stay with the people, and make them the center of the missionary efforts (Matt 10:11-13; Luke 10:1-7).

### **Small Groups in the Apostolic Church**

In order to fully comprehend the New Testament church there needs to be a careful analysis of the role of small groups and house churches. Filson (as cited in Birkey, 1988) correctly affirms:

The New Testament church would be better understood if more attention were paid to the actual physical conditions under which the first Christians met and lived. In particular, the importance and function of the house church should be carefully considered. (p. 1)

Missionaries in the New Testament extensively used Christ’s method of finding friendly households when reaching new places. As an example, this seems to be the case with the group that met in Philippi at Lydia’s house (Acts 16:14, 15, 40), the group/church that met in Corinth at Gaius’ house (Rom 16:23; Acts 18:7, 11), and at Stephanas’ household (1 Cor 1:16; 16:15). It seems clear that the preferred NT strategy



for expansion was “that of an expanding network of simple, small, reproducible, grassroots house churches” (Zdero, 2007, p. 183).

Zdero (2007) continues to argue that:

these home-based and house-sized groups were characterized by Spirit-led participatory meetings, consensus decision making, the Lord’s Supper as a full meal, baptism of adults immediately upon profession of faith, co-equal teams of unpaid leaders, and recognition of apostolic teaching and practices as authoritative in all respects. (p. 183)

It is important to note that these groups did not function in isolation from other groups; instead, they were part of a network. Zdero (2007) adds that these small groups or “house churches were networked together through occasional citywide meetings and by traveling apostolic teams that circulated from group-to-group and city-to-city” (p. 183).

Mallison (1989) explains that “it is almost certain that every mention of a local church or meeting, whether for worship or fellowship, is in actual fact a reference to a church meeting in a house” (p. 5). Bradshaw (1991) adds that “archaeological evidence confirms that in the early third century, Christians were still meeting in homes of community members” (p. 82).

In Rome, Christians met in what they called *domus ecclesiae* or house of the church. By the year A.D. 312 there were 25 of these centers that could be identified by name (Bradshaw, 1991, p. 84).

Finger gives further insight into the kind the life of the first Christians in Rome. He points out that there were three major institutions in the Roman society: “the city community” called *politeia*; “the household community” called *oikonomia*; and “the voluntary association” called *koinonia* (2007, p. 32). Many modern small groups have

taken the name of koinonia from this “voluntary association.” Paul salutes five small groups in his letter to the Romans: Priscilla and Aquila (Rom 16:5); Aristobulus (Rom 16:10); Narcissus (Rom 16:11); five persons are mentioned by name including their brothers, “greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brothers with them” (Rom 16:14, NIV); and another five called “Philologus, Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas and all the saints with them” (Rom 16:15). Finger (2007) adds that even though Paul did not know these groups personally, Priscilla and Aquila did, and since they are crucial to the gospel he salutes them in the letter written around A.D. 56 or 57 (p. 17).

Believers gathered in homes where they received teaching (Acts 5:42; 10:1-48; 16:25-34, 40; 20:17-20; 28:30-31), discipleship, study, and fellowship (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15).

### Small Groups in Early Christian History

In this section some of the most crucial elements that affected the small group movement in the early Christian Church are analyzed. During this period there are two main influences to highlight: the early Church Fathers and the Constantine contribution.

#### **Early Church Fathers**

Even before the last of the original apostles died, some influential leaders of the church started to lead the church into a different path than that directed by Christ. These changes came from within what is usually referred to as the early church fathers. They began to lead the church into formalism and centralization of its mission, life, and

organization. The sum of these factors would inevitably make the church get to the point of dismissing meeting in houses and adopting a non-biblical view of ministry.

Job (2007) argues that the first to begin this subtle move was Clement of Rome around the year A.D. 95. With him “we have the introduction of the concept that church leadership ought to be that of priesthood, with the inevitable resultant distinction being made between ‘priest’ and ‘people’” (pp. 176, 177). Job adds that he “took church leadership as set up by the apostles in the form of a non-hierarchical, plural, co-equal, indigenous group of elders, and put in its place a special ‘priesthood’ quite separate from the ordinary ‘laity’” (p. 177).

Other church fathers include Ignatius of Antioch (as cited in Job, 2007) who wrote that “we should regard the Bishop as the Lord Himself,” and that “you must do nothing without the Bishop and the presbyters” and even without the Bishop one should not even baptize or have communion (p. 177). Then Tertullian wrote from A.D. 196 to 212, arguing, “The distinction between the order of clergy and the people has been established by the authority of the Church” (Job, 2007, p. 179). Lastly, Cyprian of Carthage converted to Christianity in A.D. 246, and argues that the priest acts in Christ’s place when he offers the sacrifice as Christ did (Job, 2007, p. 179).

The role of the Church Fathers in departing from the pure apostolic teaching cannot be underestimated. Job (2007) argues that they “took Christian churches from being a proliferation of small, grassroots, localized extended families, and made them instead into a worldwide hierarchical religious corporation” (p. 179). And Zdero (2007) accurately concludes that:

these shifts included the development of clergy who were distinct from the ordinary so-called lay Christian, a hierarchical approach to one-man leadership, formality in

worship meetings, a pre-baptism probationary period for adults, the beginning of infant baptism, the observance of special holy days, a gradual rejection of miracles and spiritual gifts, and a rigidity in doctrine. (p. 184)

As it has been seen, these church fathers gradually and almost imperceptibly prepared the way for Constantine to take the Christian movement even further away from its apostolic roots of a simple lay-led ministry in houses to a priestly-led ministry in dedicated places of worship, the Cathedral Church.

### **The Constantine Contribution**

The Christian movement would be forever changed with Flavius Valerius Aurelius Constantinus. According to Zdero (2007) Constantine had received a “reasonable education” and was “well-versed in Latin Literature, exceptional in speaking Greek, and adept at philosophy” (p. 185). He showed a “politically savvy mind” and was known “for his ability and willingness to act quickly and boldly in battle” (p. 185). Right before a crucial battle he was converted, and later became the protector and supporter of the Christian faith.

Constantine’s contributions and disruptions can be summarized in five main points. The first change was a new form of freedom. This is clearly seen in his Edict of Milan where, according to Zdero, he grants “both to the Christians and to all men freedom to follow the religion which they choose, that whatever heavenly divinity exists may be propitious to us and to all that live under our government” (2007, p. 187). Constantine showed syncretism by also embracing pagan rituals, and becoming a strong supporter of Christianity (p. 187).

Second was the formulation and change of the Christian faith. Constantine called the first ever empire-wide church council that dealt with Arius’ ideas. In A.D. 325 they

met in Nicea and, according to Zdero, it soon became evident that the goal was “a resolution of the dispute, rather than in the correctness of the council’s final verdict on the Arian controversy” (Zdero, 2007, p. 188).

Constantine was also a crucial figure in changing the day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday. Again, it seems that he was not so much interested in being faithful to the apostolic teachings but instead in uniting pagans and Christians in a common day of worship and consolidating his empire.

The third important impact was Constantine’s building of churches as a place of meeting for Christians. This would prove to be one of the most detrimental contributions. Johnson (as cited in Zdero, 2007) states:

The growth of Christianity and the emperor’s involvement with it demanded a massive new building campaign that would both accommodate the day-to-day needs of the various Christian congregations throughout the empire and also honor the sites most significant to the faith. A need and an opportunity had arisen, and Constantine responded with the resources of an emperor to take advantage of that opportunity and meet that need. (p. 190)

Sanchez (2006) adds, “Following Helena’s trip to Jerusalem in AD 327, Constantine began erecting the first church buildings throughout the Roman Empire, some at the public expense, nine of which were in Rome and many others in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Constantinople” (p. 23).

Consequently, the home-based meetings that had served the Christian movement and helped fuel the expansion of the gospel for three centuries would inevitably begin its decline. Zdero analyzes the building campaign and concludes:

This provided Christians with a sense of physical safety, security, and stability that was unknown to them before. Soon enough, though, the fact that a large number of attendees could now physically fit inside a church building actually altered the nature of the church meeting itself permanently. No longer were Christians meetings small, intimate, and interactive, but rather large, impersonal, and spectator-type experiences.

Not many years later, both Basil the Great (c.AD 330-379) and John Chrysostom (c. AD 347-407) introduced complex and choreographed ceremonies for Christian worship services which, though beautiful in their own right, finally eliminated any active, spontaneous or creative participation by ordinary believers. (Zdero, 2007, pp. 192-193)

Fourth, Constantine also negatively affected the apostolic teaching of the priesthood of all believers by elevating the role and importance of the clergy. Again

Zdero points out:

During Constantine's reign, both bishops and priests saw their function and status rise in the eyes of the empire and the Christian community. No longer were they to be harried as leaders of a fringe sect but, rather, they were to be hailed as trusted servants of God and the emperor.

The ascension of the clergy was endorsed by Constantine in his appointment of Christian leaders to civil servanthood and in granting them authority to act as virtual judges in the churches. Church courts, which were already in existence, were now recognized by the empire. By AD 325, the churches in the eastern provinces had become accustomed to being organized in the same hierarchical manner as was the empire, along provincial lines. More and more, therefore, the bishops were effectively treated as the emperor's political aides. (pp. 190, 191)

The addition of all of the above contributions led to a new perceived church structure that is perfectly described by Sanchez (2006, p. 31) in a simple equation, "pastor + building + programme = church." Today, sadly, this equation is considered by many the real church.

It is clear then how Constantine severely damaged the church by marrying Christianity with the Roman Empire. Beckham (2003) argues that during this period "Satan attacked the small group. . . . The church suffered severe damage when small group community was stopped and spiritual ministry by ordinary Christians was virtually eliminated" (p. 66). Christianity ceased to be the unstoppable grassroots movement that had been diligently making disciples and transformed itself into the professional clergy-led Cathedral church in which believers only needed to be spectators. Simson (2009)

points out that with Constantine “the church experienced probably the biggest single derailment in history” (p. 19).

### Small Groups in the Pre-Reformation Period

In this section the study mainly concentrates on the development of house churches and small groups before the period known as the Reformation. It has been seen how some of the Church Fathers initiated a departure from some of the key apostolic teachings and how Constantine took it even further in establishing non-biblical practices and doctrines.

It is necessary to point out that very early there were also movements trying to foster restoration into the growing formality and coldness. Krupp and Woodrum (2007) point out that Montanus “called for holy living, greater church discipline, and preached the return of Jesus” (p. 195) around A.D. 156. This movement spread to Greece, Italy, parts of France, and North Africa (p. 195). One of his most known converts was Tertullian who wrote, “Where but three are, and they of the laity also, yet there is a church” (p. 195).

Other Christians found a solution by becoming Christian hermits. One of the most important ones was Anthony of Egypt who was born in A.D. 250 and lived to be 105 years old. He moved to a mountain to fast and pray for 20 years. The emperor Constantine wrote to him for advice (Krupp & Woodrum, 2007). Monasteries soon were established; each monastery was formed by several tribes and led by a father. These tribes consisted of several houses which had a chairman who, according to Krupp and Woodrum, was “charged with the spiritual and material well-being of the small group of believers that lived there” (p. 196).

Another important figure who used small groups was the Spanish nobleman Priscillian (A.D. 340-385). He converted to Christianity and soon became a fervent student of the Bible who started to preach and teach even though he was a lay person. He started a movement of brotherhoods that reached Spain, Portugal, and France in which only baptized believers could participate (Zdero, 2004, 62). According to Krupp and Woodrum (2007), “These small groups met in homes for Bible study and prayer. Both men and women participated and were free to use their skills and abilities during these gatherings” (p. 196). Eventually, Priscillian was excommunicated and later on arrested and beheaded (Zdero, 2004), but his movement would grow even under continued persecution (Krupp & Woodrum, 2007, pp. 196, 197).

Saint Patrick was a key figure in the Celtic Missionary movement that sprang up between A.D. 432 and 800. According to Krupp and Woodrum, He came from Scotland to Ireland in the fifth century and “God used him to restore the practice of small groups of traveling missionaries that planted churches all over the country” (2007, p. 197).

God brought several grassroots restoration movements that emerged in the late 1100s and 1200s. Beckham (2003) argues that they were solidly biblical and they had a small group expression in one form or another (p. 68). Peter Waldo (1140-1218) founded one of the largest of these groups. Waldo sold his possessions, paid his debtors, memorized large portions of the New Testament, and started traveling without a purse and preaching from city to city (Krupp & Woodrum, 2007, p. 198). The followers became known as the Waldensians and they wanted “to revive the simple practices of the apostolic age” (p. 198). They were organized in some kind of small groups and each of these groups were to a certain degree “independent, and able to pursue their particular



vision of the religious life” (Beckham, 2003, p. 68). Zdero also mentions that the Waldensians:

prohibited taking oaths, encouraged people to voluntarily renounce wealth, organized among its followers and alternate economic system to state sponsored feudalism, refuse to participate in all forms of violence, questioned much of the established church’s teachings and practices, and made great inroads among the poor, the uneducated and women. (Zdero, 2004, p. 63)

It is of no surprise that the Waldensians were excommunicated by Pope Lucius III in 1184, and later highly persecuted under the Catholic Inquisition (Krupp & Woodrum, 2007, p. 198).

At the same time a growing group of Christians were searching and experimenting with a deeper relationship with God who came to be known as the mystics. Some of the most influential among them were Bernard of Clairvaux, and some notorious women as Hildegard (1098-1179), Bridget of Sweden (1303-1373), and Catherine of Siena (1347-1380). Many of them wrote to popes and rebuked kings and emperors (Krupp & Woodrum, 2007).

Francisco Bernardone used small groups of “traveling apostolic teams to spread their message, selling all they had and going out barefoot, two by two, preaching the kingdom of God, singing, calling men to repentance, praying for the sick, and helping the poor” (Krupp & Woodrum, 2007, p. 199). Their goal was “to bring nominal Christians to a deeper faith and to win non-Christians” (p. 200). He founded several religious orders and some “historians believe that he more than any other person saved the medieval church from complete collapse” (p. 200). They reached all Europe, Africa, Asia, North and South America.

John Wycliffe (1324-1384) was a professor at Oxford University in England. According to Krupp & Woodrum, he challenged the Catholic church teachings and practices regarding “the whole range of medieval beliefs and practices including pardons, indulgences, absolutions, pilgrimages, the worship of images, the adoration of the saints, and the distinction between venial and mortal sins” (2007, p. 200). He oversaw the translation of the Bible from Latin to English and later sent men in teams of two to distribute, preach, and teach.

John Hus, a professor at the University of Prague, was influenced by Wycliffe’s writings which he translated into Bohemian and started to preach the need of a reform. He was soon called a heretic by the clergy, was later excommunicated by the Pope, and burned at the stake in 1415. His followers became known as the Bohemian Brethren. According to Krupp & Woodrum (2007), “for some time they continued meeting secretly in small groups” and “by 1467, they had become a more clearly defined body known as *Unitas Fratrum*, or *Unity of Brethren*” (p. 201). They later became known as the Moravian Church who “suffered great persecution and only survived because of their small group structure” (Beckham, 2003, p. 68).

It is clear that God was working through his chosen instruments calling people to return to Him. Krupp and Woodrum appropriately summarize their influence in this period of church history when they write:

One of the strategies God often used was the concept of the ‘small group’. Some of these small groups traveled abroad to spread the good news through public and private preaching as well as to start new churches, much as the early apostolic bands did in the New Testament era. Other small groups were stationary and functioned like house churches, being integral to the day-to-day spiritual life of a local community of Christian believers. Both expressions of the small group – the local and mobile – served to expand and solidify the church at large and the movements with which they were associated. (2007, p. 201)

## Small Groups During the Reformation

In the sixteenth century, God opened the way through the reformation movement to a new wave of small groups and house church meetings. Many of the reformers wanted deep changes not only in the theology but also in restoring “the church to its New Testament pattern, not reform the existing church” (Beckham, 2003, p. 69).

### **Martin Luther**

The German priest Martin Luther (1483-1546) was one of the reformers that desired to change the Constantine model of church and begin small group gatherings in homes. Bunton (2001) argues that Luther provided a theological foundation for group ministry with his view that “the true church was not reflected in the institutional church” (p. 1), with his belief that “every believer could teach, comfort and hear confession” (p. 2) which is part of the universal priesthood of all believers; and by calling families little churches (pp. 2, 3).

Luther also mentioned, in at least two sermons in 1523, about the blessing it would be to have believers gather in homes for edification (Bunton, 2001, p. 3).

Martin Luther wrote in 1526 the *Preface to the German Mass and Order of the Divine Service*. In it, he presents the need to have three kinds of divine services: the Latin liturgy (mainly, so the youth could learn other languages); the mass in German (for the general population who were not true believers), and a third kind which he called the “true type of evangelical order” which was aimed for those who are “desirous of being Christians in earnest” (Bunton, 2001, p. 6).

Luther shared his vision and form of these meetings:

Those, however, who are desirous of being Christians in earnest, and are ready to profess the Gospel with hand and mouth, should register their names and assemble by themselves in some house to pray, to read, to baptize and to receive the sacrament and practice other Christian works. In this Order, those who conduct was not such as befits Christians could be recognized, reprov'd, reformed, rejected, or excommunicated, according to the rule of Christ in Matt. XVIII. Here, too, a general giving of alms could be imposed on Christians, to be willingly given and divided among the poor, after the example of St. Paul in 2 Cor. IX. Here there would not be need of much fine singing. Here we could have baptism and the sacrament in short and simple fashion: and direct everything towards the Word and prayer and love. Here we should have a good short Catechism about creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer. In one word, if we only had people who longed to be Christians in earnest, Form and Order would soon shape itself. (Bunton, 2001, pp. 4, 5)

Bunton (2001) argues that Luther advocated for meetings of believers (*ecclesiola in ecclesia* or 'little church within the church'), the formation of some kind of covenant between believers, that they were to meet in homes, that they should do it with the purpose of "accountability and church discipline," and having some kind of "outreach or ministry" (p. 6).

However good Luther thought this could be, he also wrote against it arguing that "I cannot and would not order or arrange such a community or congregation at present. I have not the requisite persons for it, nor do I see many who are urgent for it" (Bunton, 2001, p. 5). Bunton presents the reasons Luther gave for not starting groups in order that:

there be no faction-forming, such as might ensue if I were to settle everything out of my own head. For we Germans are a wild, rude, tempestuous people; with whom one must not lightly make experiment in anything new, unless there be most urgent need. (p. 5)

In summary, Luther did not begin groups for "personal, practical, and political reasons" (Beckham, 2003, p. 69), and "for fear of the potential divisiveness of such groups, which could start claiming they were the only true Christians" (Zdero, 2004, p.

64). Zdero also points that “Luther would later go so far as to even deride and persecute those who promoted home gatherings as being dangerous dissenters” (p. 64).

Finally, Bunton (2001) presents the idea that regardless of Luther’s later reluctance to begin such groups many later movements referred to his writings for legitimization and inspiration (p. 6).

### **Anabaptists**

Another radical reformer was the Swiss Ulrich Zwingli who began his groups around 1520. A group of his followers became disillusioned because he backed down from some demands they were giving to the city council. According to Zdero (2004) this group of followers and friends “began to organize clandestine home meetings where biblical passages were read and discussed and the Lord’s Supper shared” (p. 66). They also started to re-baptize those who had been baptized while infants for that reason they became known as the Anabaptists. Bunton (2001) points out that “small groups were part of early Anabaptist missionary strategy” (p. 9). All their main leaders were soon dead, one by a plague, another was drowned by civil authorities, and the last one was burned at a stake (Zdero, 2004, p. 66). Anabaptist believers were highly persecuted so that between 1535 and 1546 in Netherlands and Friesland alone, “thirty thousand Anabaptists were killed” (Simson, 2009, p. 25). Nevertheless, they were soon found in Moravia, Austria, Slovakia, and Hungary (Zdero, 2004, p. 66).

### **Juan de Valdez**

In Spain, a young man from a Jewish family, Juan de Valdez (1500-1541), attended a small group meeting led by Pedro Ruiz. He started a movement in Spain and

Italy later called ‘evangelism’ or ‘Valdesianism” that attracted many Jews and outsiders (Zdero, 2004, p. 65). His books were forbidden by the Inquisition and confiscated in 1531. He fled to Naples where he formed small groups in private homes for Bible study and prayer. In Italy alone, he had about 3,000 followers. Many were executed and others had to flee from the Inquisition (p. 65).

### **Martin Bucer**

One key radical reformer that needs to be mentioned in relationship with small groups is Martin Bucer (1491-1551). Bucer spent 20 years attempting, in many different ways, to restore the church to New Testament patterns. He then “became very disappointed with the church and the morals of many within it” (Bunton, 2007, p. 205). Bunton (2001) points out that mainly Bucer wanted a “return to the New Testament in both doctrine and pattern” and “advocated a ‘second reformation’ to begin in cell groups which he called ‘*christliche Gemeinschaften*’ or Christian Communities” (p. 12). He began these communities in 1547 in Strasbourg, modern France. It is important to note that these groups had a leadership team (that met with other leaders each week), and a process of recruiting members which involved a private interview. Groups also had honest fellowship, confession of sin, accountability, some degree of sharing goods, and discipline. His groups were officially banned in 1548. Bucer moved to England where he never again wrote or organized groups. His groups completely disappeared by 1549 (Bunton, 2001, pp. 12-14).

## Small Groups After the Reformation

After the Reformation groups exploded in different places and times. There were several key figures that championed the small group movement and through them transformed churches.

### **Puritans**

In the 16th and 17th centuries a new form of spirituality developed in England within the Anglican Church. This movement became known as the Puritans because they stressed purity in “doctrine, ecclesiology, and life” (Bunton, 2004, p. 15). Historian Bunton (2004) points out that some of their key emphases were the “depth of spiritual and devotional life and its outworking into the ethical and moral sphere”; finding ways in which to have practical application in life especially in “observing the laws” and “how to behave in all circumstances” (p. 15); reading of Scriptures and other devotional books; intimate pastoral care with private conferences; and reason subordinated to the leading of the Holy Spirit (p. 16). Their small group meetings were called ‘conventicles’ and they met different days of the week to sing, pray, talk about God, and repeat sermons. These groups were successful in helping people transform their lives (p. 17).

### **Quakers**

Some Puritans became disillusioned with their movement and under the leadership of George Fox (1626-1691) began calling the church to renewal. Bunton (2004) states that “while still attending official places of worship they began to meet in homes for prayer and Bible study” (p. 18). Quakers mainly wanted the “restoration of primitive Christianity and felt that church buildings, offices, liturgy, and sacraments were

not part of that Christianity” (p. 18). Zdero presents a good summary of the Quakers beliefs when he writes:

The Quakers emphasized the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer’s life, the inner light and seed in each person, personal piety, open Spirit-led church meetings, complete pacifism, solidarity with the poor and ordinary workers, equality between sexes, and opposition to both Catholic and Protestant ‘steeple houses’ and clergy systems. To eliminate false distinctions between sacred and secular places of worship, they preached in the open air and met in homes (2004, pp. 67, 68).

Zdero declares that many Quakers decided to proclaim the gospel traveling two by two and gaining “20,000 converts in the first five years of their mission and attracting severe persecution from religious and civil authorities” (p. 67). The movement spread abroad rapidly reaching Europe, the British Islands, America, and the West Indies (Bunton, 2007, p. 208).

## **Pietism**

The term Pietism is a way of describing a renewal movement in the 17th and 18th centuries within the Protestant church and at some points also in the Roman Catholic Church. Bunton (2001) argues that Johann Arndt writings (1555-1621) laid down the foundation of Pietist movement (p. 19). Pietists insisted on the need of conversion and a personal relationship with God. Pietists established small groups called ‘*collegia*’ or ‘*collegia pietatis*’ (groups of piety). And they believed the Bible was not only good for doctrine but to affect everyday life and good works would overflow from there (pp. 20, 21).

According to Zdero (2004) Jean de Labadie (1610-1674), a former Jesuit priest who became a Protestant minister, was a key figure in establishing ‘conventicles’ in Holland, France, and Switzerland (pp. 66-67). According to Bunton (2001) Labadie even



wrote that “establishing small groups should be one of the main occupations of the pastor” (p. 21). Men and women came to his groups but only men were allowed to speak (Bunton, 2007, p. 211)

One of the most influential thinkers of Pietism was Phillip Jakob Spener (1635-1705) who was a student of Labadie. He advocated for meetings in homes arguing that with this he was reintroducing ‘the apostolic kind of meetings’ (Bunton, 2007, p. 211). These groups met twice a week and in these group meetings “pastors or professors would serve as qualified facilitators of these groups, whose focus was discipleship and holiness” (Zdero, 2004, p. 68).

Another important figure was Theodor Untereyck (1635-1693) who according to Bunton (2007) led groups for men and other groups for children while his wife led groups for women, and another for servant girls (p. 211).

### **Anglicans**

In England, Dr. Anthony Horneck (1641-1697) helped establish ‘societies’ first among young men and later with women in order to promote holiness in life and spiritual growth (Bunton, 2001, pp. 37, 38). These groups also had the motivation of returning to the new Testament Church primitivism. There were 49 societies in London and Dublin alone in 1700 with some 300 in attendance, and by 1750 there were 433 societies in Wales and other regions of England (p. 39). They had strict written rules, each group was led by an ordained minister, and they also exercised disciplinary functions (p. 39). Finally, it is crucial to note that they had a great impact on John Wesley.

## **Catholics**

The Catholic Church also had movements looking for a deeper and renewed spiritual life. One of the most notorious was Henri de Levis, a French noble man, who wanted the restoration of New Testament Christianity. He founded the Company of the Blessed Sacrament in 1630 which became a society for lay men mainly among noble people. Bunton (2001) mentions that they aimed “to do as much good as possible and to remove as much evil as possible” (p. 44). These groups studied the Bible and sought to become holy. Members were encouraged to “correct their brethren and point out issues in each other’s lives where holiness was lacking; all should receive such admonishments willingly” (p. 44). They had 50 groups in France with several thousands in attendance. Gaston de Renty was one of the first members of this society and became the leader of the society when Levis died. John Wesley discovered a biography of Gaston de Renty while at Oxford and produced an abridgment in 1741. Bunton (2001) argues that “it is likely that Wesley was particularly influenced in the area of growth in holiness towards perfection, and the outworking of the devotional life into social action” by the life of Gaston de Renty (p. 45).

## **The Moravians**

In the 18th century God brought groups to a new level under the leadership of Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760). He grew up in a Pietist family and studied also in Pietist educational institutions. He received religious refugees from Moravia and Bohemia in 1722 in his lands in Saxony. They began a religious community that was later called Herrnhut which had a strong small group structure and where they emphasized the joy of knowing Christ, holy living, and intimate community (Bunton,

2001, pp. 47-49). Bunton explains that they were organized in three different kinds of groups: the first one was Bands, consisting mainly of two to three people (but later compromising up to nine) of the same sex and marital status who openly shared their spiritual state and provided pastoral care to each other. They had a leader and co-leader who met with other leaders to discuss problems. Second, Choirs, which was a second and larger level of community, similar to our affinity groups today. They had choirs for single brothers, single sisters, widows, widowers, little boys, little girls, infants, older boys, older girls, and the married. Third, Diaspora Societies, which were the societies missionaries would establish as they went to foreign lands (Bunton, 2001, pp. 48-55).

Moravians so greatly emphasized missions that they “sent the biggest missionary force in the history of the Protestant church to that date, often taking small group structures with them” (Bunton, 2001, p. 54).

### **The Methodists**

In the eighteenth century Great Britain was home to one of the greatest small group movements and spiritual renewals under the direction of John Wesley (1703-1791). He founded and led several different kinds of groups that all aimed to attain holiness (one of them called ‘Holy Club’). He traveled to Georgia, America, as a missionary but returned in a “deep spiritual depression” (Zdero, 2004, p. 68). After meeting and studying with some Moravian brethren he was converted. Wesley sought to restore Christianity to New Testament holiness. His movement gave birth to the Methodist Church.

His small group success and influence was so paramount that Beckham (2003) mentions that “secular historians credit Wesley’s movement for saving England from a bloody revolution such as happened in France and other countries in Europe” (p. 70).

John Wesley traveled preaching outdoors but saw the need to provide care and help these new converts grow. Along with his co-leaders they developed what Bunton (2007) describes as “a vast and interlocking network of groups to turn these raw converts into mature disciples and many into leaders” (p. 215).

#### Organization of Wesley’s small groups

Methodism developed three different kinds of groups to meet different needs. They had societies, classes, and bands. What follows is an analysis of each one of them.

**Societies.** The first and larger meetings were the Societies, which were mainly worship meetings, with the purpose of providing “cognitive understanding” for the mind (Beckham, 2003, p. 70). These societies were somehow similar to our current worship services in churches.

**Classes.** The second level were the ‘classes’, which according to Zdero (2004) consisted of groups of six to twelve people who met weekly with the purpose of discipline, “accountability, discipleship, care of the sick, and collecting money in support of the poor” (p. 69). Bunton (2001) points out that they were evangelistic in nature, a fact clearly seen considering that there were “more professed conversions in class meetings than in the preaching services” (p. 64).

Another very interesting point to highlight is the role of visitors in these ‘class meetings’. Bunton (2007) mentions that “visitors could attend, but every other meeting was only for the members. After two visits, one had either to join or cease to attend” (p. 216).

Bunton (2007) offers a good summary of these groups when he writes:

Class meetings were formed according to geographic location. They consisted of both men and women, and people of different social backgrounds, ages, and maturity in the Christian faith. . . . The format was usually the singing of a hymn, the leader's opening with a statement as to this spiritual condition, followed by others so doing, including testimony or admission of sin. (pp. 215, 216)

The 'classes meetings' became the cornerstone of Wesley's method of groups and success. Attendance to classes was so crucial that people were not allowed to attend Societies if they were not part of a class meeting. Furthermore, tickets were given quarterly for the entrance to Societies, if attendance was lacking, one would not receive it. Bunton (2001) argues that "such exclusion was for the edification of those concerned that they might repent or turn again more fully to Christ" (p. 64).

Assessing the impact of the 'class meeting' Henderson concludes, "the class meeting turned out to be the primary means of bringing millions of England's most desperate people into the liberating discipline of Christian faith" (as cited in Beckham, 2003, p. 70). Zdero (2004) evaluates the success of John Wesley and his groups by mentioning that in 1791, at the time of Wesley's death, "the Methodist movement in Britain and the United States was composed of approximately 10,000 home cell groups and over 100,000 people" (p. 69).

*Bands.* Third, there were also other groups called 'bands'. According to Bunton (2001) these were groups consisting of people of the "same sex, same marital status and of similar age" (p. 64). The main purpose of these groups was to achieve closer union, the confessing of sins and temptations. These groups were exclusively for believers and especially for mature ones. Bunton (2001) adds that they did not have an appointed leader and in order to join a 'band, one had to go through a "rigorous screening process and trial

period before others agreed to their admission” (p. 65). These ‘bands’ did not multiply or become as widespread as Wesley would have hoped for.

Wesley felt so strongly about the organization of groups that he would “refuse to preach in any area unless he was permitted to organize converts into cell groups with adequate leadership installed” (Zdero, 2004, p. 69). He also established “circuit riders” who acted like today’s group coaches. They had to visit different areas, oversee groups, and bring cohesion to the movement. Leaders of his ‘classes’ had to meet weekly with the minister or Stewards of the society to inform and give the offerings collected for the poor. These ‘class’ leaders were selected, trained, and supervised by the Society leaders (Bunton, 2001, p. 67).

Primary keys for the success of Wesley’s groups

Analyzing the success of Wesley’s groups one discovers endogenous factors (from within the Methodist movement) and exogenous factors (outside).

*Endogenous.* Henderson (as cited in Bunton, 2001) presents mainly ten methodological components behind the success:

A hierarchy of interlocking groups; the point of entry into the system is behavioral change, followed by affective, aspirational and rehabilitative functions; constitutional authority (that is authority in the rules, not in Wesley); groups were graded by readiness; total participation and mobilization; instrumental group activities (that is, prepared questions); exclusion for non-compliance; individual care; multiple accountability; separation of cognitive, affective and behavioral functions. (p. 71)

I believe another crucial point for their success was the role of the circuit rider, who acted as a coach supervising groups, giving direction and cohesion.

*Exogenous.* There were many key issues and factors in the society in the eighteenth century. Bunton (2001) presents the following four exogenous reasons: First,

there were the social and demographic changes with increasing industrialization and urbanization that produced isolation. Wesley offered structure, methods, kinship groups, and a close network of relationships. Second, there was “an increasing sense of the private self being the repository of spiritual experience” (p. 72). Third, the movement grew among skilled artisans and hard working poor who were able to contribute financially. Fourth, during 1730-1750 B.C. there seems to be a stable time in British history and somehow “a vacuum in British church life” (p. 72).

#### Reasons for the decline in Wesley’s groups

Finke and Stark (as cited in Sanchez, 2006) provide several reasons for the decline and final death of these groups. They mention “the loss of the circuit riding preacher, a centralized church hierarchy, a diminished role for the laity, full time clergy becoming normative, increasing educational requirements, and rising affluence” (p. 485).

Other additional reasons mentioned by Hankinson (1997) include that “Methodism, due to redemptive lift, had become a more middle class movement”; an “excessive authoritarianism by those leading the groups”; the development of other mission centered para-ministries that “filled the gap cause by the formalism, rigidity and loss of vision” (pp. 134-135). Udy adds the loss of “the tremendous sense of urgency which sent men out with consuming passion to turn others to the pardoning God” (as cited in Hankinson, 1997, p. 135).

#### **Adventism**

The Methodist group structure is considered today foundational to the Protestant small group movement. It seems that early Adventists, many of whom came from a

Methodist background, borrowed the idea and brought it to the Adventist Church. The influence of this heritage can be clearly seen in the writings of White where she advocated for relational meetings in churches and homes, which were then called social or prayer meetings. Burrill (1997) states that at that time, the Methodist class meeting “was being replaced by the prayer meeting” (p. 103) and Adventists followed in adopting it. He adds that “the Adventist model seems to be a combination of the class meetings and the early Methodist prayer meetings after preaching services” (pp. 103, 104).

White strongly advocated participation of members. She wrote: “A Christian is a Christ like man, a Christ like woman, who is active in God’s service, who is present at the social meeting, whose presence will encourage others also” (1955, p. 271).

Many times these social meetings met after worship and preaching services, later on during the Sabbath, or during the week (Burrill, 1997). This was especially true when the group was large. They met in the temples, in tents, or wherever they could find a place.

Hankinson’s (1997) study strongly suggests that these ‘social meetings’ were from 10-100 persons (p. 148) and met in big enough spaces to hold them. He points out that some records from the time show attendances of 30 to 40, another of 60 to 70 persons; while others mention having 15 testimonies in one night. In other instances, these social meetings met in private homes where the number was reduced to around 12. Some of these meetings were also called ‘home Bible studies’ (p. 151), or ‘small companies’ (White, 1974, p. 115).

Burrill (1997) explains that “it’s clear that these early social meetings were relational in nature. Little if any Bible study occurred there” (p. 104). They had the form



of testimonies where people also confessed their sins with tears, pleaded for pardon, and shared how they were daily living with Christ. People also talked about their dreams, hopes, and struggles with openness.

So important were these meetings to early Adventists that “people who deliberately absented themselves from social meetings were considered in need of spiritual help” (Burrill, 1997, pp. 108, 109). They were clear that their greatest need was for fellowship with other believers. They strongly believed that “they needed a relational meeting if they were going to grow spiritually” (Burrill, 1997, p. 108). Burrill poignantly states that “when new churches were organized, the early church leaders seemed more concerned with the relational experience of believers than with their doctrinal purity” (p. 109).

### Small Groups Lessons for Today

After analyzing how groups in many different forms were established throughout history it is time now to draw some lessons from the past for the present and future of small groups.

All groups seem to have some common theological characteristics. Bunton (2001) presents eight key characteristics: (1) a corporate understanding of Christianity instead of individualistic view; (2) church as a living organism, not as a structure or organization; (3) the Christian faith as a real and joyful experience; (4) the priesthood of all believers; (5) the voluntary decision to join groups; (6) growth, life, and sanctification as a process of development; (7) confession to another believer; and (8) church discipline as a privilege and responsibility of groups (pp. 74-78).

Another important factor was the motivation for starting groups. Many of the small group movements started as an attempt to restore the New Testament faith, also called primitivism. Groups were also started in order to grow in holiness and accountability (Moravians and Wesley's groups). At the same time groups wanted to minister, help the poor, and bring social justice. Finally, they also wanted to bring reform and purify their mother churches.

Yount and Barnett (2007) believe there are three crucial lessons to learn from the history of small groups: first, "the importance that God himself places on this ecclesiological form"; second, "that when God is actively expanding his kingdom on earth, there is the house church and small group;" and last, "when the church needs reforming, do not be surprised if the house church or small group serves as the foundation" (Yount and Barnett, 2007, pp. 165, 166).

From the study, I realized and believe there are other key lessons that need to be highlighted:

1. The structure of the groups is not the most important factor, but instead the motivation, vision, and values behind it;
2. Small groups should always be part of a network of groups;
3. A clear mission and identity is crucial for the success of the groups;
4. Successful small group movements had a key leader who articulated the vision and coordinated their growth (Zinzendorf and Wesley);
5. The most successful movements had a clear goal of group multiplication;
6. Groups need trained leaders for their success and multiplication (Wesley);

7. Group leaders need to meet regularly in order to plan, grow, and receive support;
8. Group leaders also need coaching from more experienced leaders (circuit rider in Wesley's groups) for their advancement, cohesion, and vision;
9. Groups need to be open and outwardly focus or they will soon degenerate;
10. Laity involvement is crucial for groups to flourish and achieve its goals;
11. The size of the group matters, and for that reason it should be limited;
12. Discipline and accountability are privileges and responsibilities of a healthy group and instead of hindering growth, they foster it; groups flourish better when they meet in homes instead of in church buildings;
13. When the sense of urgency and vision are lost, there is great danger that groups will begin to die (Wesley).

As it has been clearly seen, every time there was a renewal movement among God's people, it has always been associated with some kind of small group movement that supported and helped it to move forward.

### **Small Groups Models**

There are currently many small group models presented by respected individuals. Some share some common characteristics but also present very different approaches to doing groups. Choosing from all of them could be challenging, so it is crucial to pay attention to the words of Easum (2007):

It's critical that you build a small group ministry that is designed to reach into the mindset of the people who live in today's society. One of the biggest failures in small groups ministries we've seen is they're patterned after antiquated models of modernity that worked well for past generations. This is a new generation of people

who see the world in far different ways that our parents saw things. Don't assume you know what the mindset of today's society is. (pp. 7, 8)

Models can basically be divided in three different categories: the program model (a church with small groups); the meta model (churches of small groups); and the pure cell model (the group or cell is the church). Each one of these models is briefly analyzed.

### Program Model: Churches "With" Small Groups

This model is often seen in churches today including Seventh-day Adventist churches. Following is a brief study of the main characteristics of the model, followed by a discussion on the main sub-models under this category.

#### **Main Characteristics**

Churches 'with' small groups are usually a program-based design, where the basic "assumption is that programs are necessary to build people" (Neighbour, 2000, p. 66). Specialists or volunteers are assigned to lead main programs, and many make enormous sacrifices to run those programs while at least 40 to 50% of the congregation remains inactive (pp. 66, 67). Small groups are seen as another useful program to which members ought to attend. Beckham (2004) adds that "the focus in a church with groups is performance for Christ . . . a Martha group, working to Jesus, completing a task or organizing a ministry for Jesus" (p. 81). He continues to say that the "members have the option of being in a group or not being in a group and of participating in any kind of group they like" (p. 81). In these groups witnessing relies heavily on information.

Among this church 'with' group model there are some sub-models that can be identified:

### **The Covenant Model**

This model main figure is Roberta Hestenes. These groups are mainly for believers, have the goal of spiritual reformation, long term community, and require a strong level of commitment and accountability (usually people in a group sign a covenant).

Coleman (as cited in Comiskey, 1997) evaluates this kind of group by saying that “unchurched, non-Christians would not be interested in this type of group. There is no mechanism built into the system for the Covenant groups to multiply, or to close with honor. Frequently, Covenant groups will last until they die a horrible death” (p. 81).

### **The Free Market Model**

The main promoter of these groups is Haggard (2002). Boren (2003) argues that “these groups gather around an interest for a short-term commitment of one semester” and their goal is “to use an interest to connect people and lead them one step closer to accepting Christ” (pp. 35, 36). Groups can meet to play volleyball, go fly fishing, mountain biking, or discuss evolution. They may or may not talk about God, pray, or read the Bible, but they will all use people’s passions to bring them closer to God.

### **The Serendipity Model**

This model founder is Coleman (as cited in Comiskey, 1997), who produced the Serendipity Bible. Coleman describes his groups by saying that “the intention is to create a small group system where people outside the church can find a place of entry and be transformed” (pp. 79, 80). Comiskey summarizes these groups’ main characteristics into four: they have a definite beginning and end, offer a democracy of groups, includes all

kinds of groups, and have a collegiate system similar to Sunday school which even has a graduation (p. 80).

### Meta Model: Churches “of” Small Groups

This model is very popular, especially among “seeker” churches. Many of the so called mega churches also fall in this category. Following is an analysis of the main characteristics of this model and some prominent supporters.

#### **Meta Model Characteristics**

The Meta model for churches ‘with’ small groups as been pioneered by George with his books, *Prepare Your Church for the Future* and *The Coming Church Revolution*. He advocates (1994) for nurture groups which are described as “the engine that propels a Meta-Church and leads to an exponential growth multiplication is the work of the Holy Spirit through lay-led home discipleship centers” (p. 28). George further describes these groups by saying that “these are affinity-based, spiritual-gift dependent, lay shepherded, supervised, evangelistic and self-reproducing. Virtually all ministry is decentralized to these groups. Such a system frees clergy to focus their energies on training lay leadership” (1994, p. 28).

Icenogle (1994) thinks that the Meta church model is “an extrapolation of the Old Testament narrative of Jethro’s advice to Moses” in Exodus 18 (p. 100)

Meta groups are part of a Meta Church philosophy presented by George (1994) which he describes in the following way: “The Meta-Church doesn’t advocate a particular curriculum (chapter 5), a particular worship style (chapter 9) or a particular brand of small groups (chapter 12)” (p. 28). Analyzing his words, it seems that any kind

or form of group would be included, no wonder Beckham (2004) concludes that the Meta idea is in essence a “buffet approach to groups” (p. 112).

### **Main Churches and Pastors That use the Meta Model**

Several renowned churches practice some adaptations of the Meta model. Willow Creek Church with Bill Hybels, located in the suburbs of Chicago, mainly has two types of groups: seekers and nurture groups. Other churches that adhere to this model are Saddleback Community Church with Rick Warren in California, and The Journey with Nelson Searcy in New York.

## Pure Cell Model: Cell Churches

In the Pure cell model the small group ‘is’ in essence the church. Neighbour argues that the small group or cell:

“is the basic building block of the larger community called ‘local church’. There must be no competition with it—none at all! Everything in the city-wide structure must exist for the cells, be operated by the cells, and must strengthen the life of the cells. *As in the life in the body, the life of the church is in the cell.*” (as cited in Comiskey, 1997, p. 63)

Among the supporters of this model are David (formerly Paul) Yonggi Cho, Ralph Neighbour, Joel Comiskey, Larry Stockstill, and Mario Vega.

Prolific cell group writer, Comiskey (1997), gives a list of the key components of the pure cell model: (1) cells form part of the local church structure; (2) emphasis on components or characteristics of the cell; (3) similarity among the cell groups; (4) partnership in evangelism; (5) focus on multiplication of the cell group; uniformity of lesson material; (6) required cell leader training; (7) rapid releasing of leadership; (8) very few programs apart from cells; (9) commitment of head pastor to cell ministry; (10) goal of one hundred percent participation in cell groups (Comiskey, 1997, pp. 63-71). Boren (2003) adds other key characteristics like equipping every member for ministry, leadership huddles, and facilitative ministries (pp. 37-38).

According to Comiskey (1997) this model has gain great support in Latin American, Africa, Singapore and other parts of the world (p. 60).

The key figure in this model has been Pastor David Yongii Cho, who was the founder and senior pastor of Yoido Full Gospel Church until 2008. With 780,000 members they are the largest Christian church, and keep adding 1,000 more each month (Gaines, 2010, para. 3, 4).



Another key figure in this model is Pastor Cesar Castellanos from Bogota, Colombia. He is the pastor of the International Charismatic Mission. Castellanos uses a modified version of the pure cell model, called G12. According to Beckham (2004) his system is similar to the classic pure cell model with the following differences: Leadership is linear instead of circular, supervision is unofficial instead of official, cell development in phases instead of steps, and multiplication is generational instead of biological (p. 143).

Pastor Mario Vega, senior pastor of the ELIM church in El Salvador, is also a prominent supporter of the pure cell model. According to Comiskey, the ELIM church is the second largest church in the world, currently having “approximately 11,000 cell groups and 110,000 people attending the cells (2010a, para. 4).

For decades, Neighbour has been the leading figure in North America in promoting the Pure Cell model. His book *Where Do We Go From Here* has become a must read for all desiring to understand this model more clearly. Boren (2003) adds that “one of his main emphases has been the “equipping every cell member for ministry” (p. 31).

### Observations on Models

In analyzing each of the small group models one sees advantages and disadvantages in each one of them. It is very clear that some require less commitment, training of leaders, and supervision than others. At the same time, depending on the overall goals (evangelism, community, ministry, etc.) and desired outcomes, one model applies better than another. The model that seems to fit better in our vision for groups is an adaptation of the Pure Cell model.

## **Small Group Leadership Training**

In trying to choose the appropriate small group model one needs to keep in mind the leadership training that each model uses. As Donahue and Robinson (2001) say, “An emerging small group ministry cannot succeed without a commitment to effective leadership development. . . . A small group ministry rises and falls on the quality of its leaders” (p. 122). Comiskey (2000) emphasizes the importance of good leadership training by adding:

Unless small group members are converted into small group leaders, little long-term fruit remains. Churches do not reap the harvest because they have small groups. They reap the harvest because they have harvest workers. Churches that have no plan to develop leaders have by default, planned to lose the harvest.” (p. 16)

Small group leadership training is highly tied to the model one desires to follow. I believe there are two main small group leadership training approaches: Minimal or no required training; and intensive and upfront training. Let us briefly analyze each one of them and the models they represent.

### **Minimal or No Training**

This model does not require much training before the person begins leading a small group meeting. Egli argues that:

There is currently a very popular trend to lower the qualifications for small group leaders in order to increase the number of groups. So churches, for example, instead of looking for called ‘leaders,’ recruit hosts that know how to work a VCR or DVD player (para. 6).

At The Journey Church, pastors Nelson Searcy and Kerrick Thomas (2008), have a 3-hour training for their future leaders where they share the basics on the purpose of groups, filling groups, following up on group signups; role clarification with the responsibilities of a leader, coordinator, and host; how to lead your group with using the

covenant, leading your group in evangelism and service, handling pastoral care; and vision casting (pp. 192, 195).

Several of the well-known churches that use the Meta Model fall under this category.

### On the Job Training

Coleman (as cited in Comiskey, 1996) describes how the on the job training functions when he talks about the Meta model and calls it “an -apprenticeship, and it is basically the associate, assistant, or co-leader who is ‘mentored’ while they are in the group” (Meta model, para. 2). Comiskey (1996) adds that “to compensate for the lack of up-front training, each cell leader and intern in the Meta model must attend on-going bimonthly leadership training” (Meta model, para. 6). The Meta model for training leaders (if they offer any) is so diverse that eventually it will be very difficult to provide meaningful training to all the different group leaders.

### Up-front Intensive Training

The up-front intensive training main supporters are the people who adhere to the Pure Cell model. Among them are Ralph Neighbor, Joel Comiskey, Scott Boren, and Mario Vega.

According to Comiskey (1996), “the Serendipity Model of leadership training requires six sessions of up-front training with periodic on-going training” (Models for Training Cell Leaders and Interns, 1996, para. 3).

David Cho’s model of training, says Comiskey (1996), includes an eight-week training course for potential group leaders in which they discuss topics that include: the responsibilities of the cell leader, growth of the group, preparation of the Bible lesson,

etc. In the past they had a weekly leaders meeting for ongoing training, which was later replaced by a twice-a-year conference (Cho model, para. 4).

The ELIM church in El Salvador started with a four-week training and later on saw the need of a better way to develop their leaders. According to their senior pastor, Mario Vega, they designed “a course which could lead a person from his conversion to leadership” and they produced a course “with 26 lessons to be imparted in six months” each one given in an hour (personal communication, September 30, 2011).

### Observations on Leadership Formation Models

After analyzing different models for training small group leaders, considering the biblical foundations, history, the Adventist theology, the role of the pastor, and the purpose of groups, I believe the most appropriate training to our situation and vision, is to create an adaptation of the Pure Cell method for developing leaders.

It is my opinion that a meaningful leadership development program for small group leaders needs to have a solid and comprehensive up-front training, which would include a theory and a practical/experiential part, followed by monthly ongoing training for leaders and support by qualified small group coaches.

## CHAPTER 4

### PROFILE OF THE WSDAC

This chapter analyzes the key factors that are crucial for a better understanding of the WSDAC in Miami, Florida. The chapter begins with a brief examination of the history and present of the WSDAC. Following there is a profile of the youth in this church which includes demographical and generational challenges of second generation Hispanics. Last, the chapter ends with an overview of the youth involvement, participation, and evangelistic efforts.

#### **Brief History of the Church**

The WSDAC is part of the sisterhood of Seventh-day Adventist churches in the state of Florida. The Florida Conference website states that “the territory of Florida Conference, organized in 1893, includes the entire state except Bay, Calhoun, Escambia, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton, and Washington counties which belong to the Gulf States Conference” (Florida Conference, para. 3). In January 2011, the conference had 192 organized churches and 52 companies, with a total membership of more than 60,000 (Florida Conference, para. 3).

According to R. Llaurodo (personal communication, April 30, 2011), the WSDAC began with a group of SDA Hispanics that met at the Miami Temple SDA Church in the late 1970s. By February 1980 this group, under the direction of Pastor Sergio Torres,

started to rent the facilities of the church located in Coral Way and 98th Avenue. They had their first series of evangelistic meetings there led by Pastor Cameron. The church began to look for a property in which to build a new temple, but after many unsuccessful attempts they felt the Lord miraculously led them to a temple owned by the Baptist church. In 1986, the WSDAC finally bought the church facilities from the Baptist congregation located on 16th Street and 95th Avenue in Westchester. The church was led at that time by pastor Carlos Turcios. The WSDAC received many immigrants from Cuba in the 1980s, which came to be known as the Mariel exodus. R. Llauro (personal communication, April 30, 2011) added that this new influx, gave new energy and vitality to this newborn church.

The new facilities bought in 1986 were remodeled and later on expanded to accommodate the ever growing congregation and better serve the community. In 2010, under the leadership of Pastor Daniel Amich, plans for a new sanctuary and the expansion of the church facilities were approved by the zoning committee of the Westchester city. The new construction is expected to begin as soon as the necessary funds become available.

Throughout its 30 years of existence, the WSDAC has been blessed with dedicated pastors who have led the church to spiritual and numerical growth. A complete list of the senior and associate/youth pastors since the beginning of the WSDAC up to the present can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

*Pastors of the WSDAC From Beginning to Date*

Senior Pastor	Associate/youth pastor
Sergio Torres (1980-1984)	Raul Parra (1980-1984)
Carlos Turcios (1984-1988)	José López (1988-1990)
Eddy Romero (1988-1992)	René Basulto (1990-1994)
Rafael Rodriguez (1992-1997)	Manuel Molina (1994-1997)
William Stout (1997)	Alexander Pinilla (1999-2001)
Manuel Fernandez (1998-2003)	Vicmael Arroyo (2001-2004)
Daniel Amich (2003-present)	Mike Monroig (2004-2007)
	Denis Sand (2007-2011)

The WSDAC that began with a handful of members back in the late 1970s after 30 years of existence had by the end of 2010, a total membership of 870 members. In the last seven years a total of 129 people have been baptized with an average of 18 a year. During the same period of time, there were 27 professions of faith and 114 people who became members by transfers from other churches, bringing the total number of people added to the WSDAC in the last seven 7 years to 266. At the same time there were 167 members dropped. More details can be seen in Table 2.

Understanding the challenges, times, and opportunities of reaching today's youth, the WSDAC leadership proposed to have a second service in the sanctuary aimed to reaching second generation Hispanics with a postmodern worldview. This service began on March 6, 2010 under the name ALIVE (Abundantly Living In View of Eternity) and it is a full bilingual service targeted to youth who speak both Spanish and English and need no translation to either one.

Table 2

*WSDAC Statistical Report*

Year	Initial membership	Baptism	Profession of faith	Letter	Adjustment	Total added	Letter	Deceased	Removed	Missing	Total Dropped	Ending membership
2004	771	17	2	25	2	46	6	2	0	0	8	809
2005	809	16	6	7	1	30	15	0	2	0	17	822
2006	822	9	1	21	14	45	15	0	0	0	15	852
2007	852	19	0	15	1	35	15	1	0	0	16	871
2008	871	22	4	17	-11	32	13	13	0	59	85	818
2009	818	27	13	22	-13	49	9	3	1	0	13	854
2010	854	19	1	7	2	29	13	0	0	0	13	870
Total		129	27	114	-4	266	86	19	3	59	167	
Average per year		18.43	3.86	16.29	-0.57	38.00	12.29	2.71	0.43	8.43	23.86	

The average attendance for Saturday services at the WSDAC for the year 2010 was 354, and 363 for the first four months of 2011, counting the two worship services that the church offers, the Spanish one (10:50am) and the ALIVE service (12:45pm), which is held mainly in English (R. Llaurodo, personal communication, June 29, 2011).

### Profile of the Westchester Community

Before getting into the youth of the WSDAC it is crucial to consider some key factors about the community in which the youth of the church live their daily lives. The church is located in the Miami-Dade County in south Florida, more precisely in the community of Westchester CDP. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000) Westchester CDP in Florida had a total population of 30,271 people, being 53.4% of them female, and 46.6% male (p. 1). The median age in Westchester is of 43.1 years of age. There are also 8,723 people between the ages of 10 and 34, which represents 28.9% of the total population (p. 1).



Without any doubts Westchester CDP in Florida is a Hispanic community, which is clearly seen by the fact that 85.3% of the population in this area identifies themselves as Hispanics or Latinos (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, p. 1). At the same time it is important to see that 65.7% of the population in this area comes from a Cuban background, 69% of the Westchester population is foreign born, and 96.4% of those foreign born were born in Latin America (p. 1). It is of no surprise that the language spoken by 88% the population five years and older is Spanish, and English as the only language spoken accounts only to 10.7% of the population in this area (p. 2).

Family households constitute 81.4%, while families of married couples amount to 60.5% (p. 1). It is interesting to note that 15.7% of the population are female householders with no husband present and that 21.2% of the population in the Westchester community 15 years old and over has never been married (p. 1). At the same time, 34.2% of households in this community have individuals under the age of 18 (p. 1).

Economically, the Westchester CDP in Florida has 54.2% of their population in the labor force (p. 3). The median household income recorded by the 2000 census was 40,762 dollars and 44,863 dollars for a median family income (p. 3). The per capita income was 17,262 dollars, while 11.8% of individuals and 8.5% of families were in poverty status (Census Bureau, 2000, p. 3)

In the year 2008 the WSDAC asked the *Percent Group* to perform a study of the population in the area in which the church has influence. The results were presented in a report titled First View 2008 which had mainly five areas (Percent Group, 2008). The first results were about people and places. It showed that while the U.S. as a whole grew by 21% in population, the church area of influence had grown in population by 34.1%.

The geographical area of the church was found to be somewhat high in the overall diversity. The education of the people in the area of influence in the WSDAC was found to be somewhat low. From the population age 25 and over only 70.6% had graduated from high school (U.S. average is 80.4%) while only 21.5% of college students over 25 years of age had graduated (U.S. average is 24.4%; Percent Group, 2008, p. 5).

The third area had to do with community issues. Among the major concerns of people in this area are hopes and dreams (31%) and spiritual/personal (15%). The study also revealed that the “area’s potential resistance is likely to be somewhat high” with 39.1% (p. 5). This certainly gives the WSDAC areas in which to concentrate and work in reaching the community for Christ. But the church needs to be aware that it might find resistance as it tries to do it.

Perhaps the most interesting results came in the area titled ‘Faith preferences’. The study showed that 38% of the people in the study area did not have any religious affiliations, 30% were somewhat involved and 32% strongly involved (p. 6). Another very interesting finding was that “based upon the likely worship, music and architectural style preferences in the area, the overall church styles preference can be described as somewhat contemporary” (p. 6). At the same time 42% of the people in the area of study (while U.S. average is 38%) show a preference for church programs and services related to the overall category of ‘recreation’ (p. 6).

### **Profile of the WSDAC Youth**

In order to better work with the youth it is crucial to understand the factors and forces that influence them. The WSDAC youth are part of the community and share

many of their challenges, dreams, and worries. Following are some of the crucial elements for a better understanding of them.

### Second Generation Hispanics

The WSDAC is a Hispanic church and its youth, which is mainly second generation Hispanics, faces most of the same challenges that the general population of second generations Hispanics faces. This section will briefly analyze who a Hispanic is, and the second generation of Hispanics with their characteristics, challenges, and opportunities for ministry.

### **Who are Hispanics?**

A recent study done by ‘MRM Worldwide’ (2008) defined the term ‘Hispanic’ by saying that it is a “very general term created as a bureaucratic catchall to refer to a broad ethnicity—in the sense of a shared Spanish language, shared cultural traits, and in most cases, a shared Spanish ancestry” (p. 4).

Hispanics are the largest minority according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In 2010 Hispanics numbered 50.5 million, or 16% of the total U.S. population (Census Bureau, 2010). At the same time it is important to note that “with an average of 3.5 children, these households are twice the size of the national norm of 1.71—reflecting first-generation Hispanic Americans’ high fertility rate” (MRM Worldwide, 2008, p. 5). Hispanics, in general and to a greater or lesser extent, are bilingual in language (65%), English dependent (18%), or Spanish dependent (17%; p. 6).

For study purposes Hispanics are usually divided into three major groups. The first group are Hispanic Americans (or first generation Hispanics), which are “immigrants

who were born and raised in a Spanish-speaking country as natives of that country, and who immigrated to the United States” (MRM Worldwide, 2008, p. 3). Depending on their legal status, they can be “naturalized US citizens, legal immigrants or undocumented immigrants” (Suro & Passel, 2003, p. 2). The second group are the American Hispanics (or second generation Hispanics), which are “the U.S.-born and raised children of one or more Hispanic American parents” (MRM Worldwide, 2008, p. 3). The third group is the “third-plus” generation of Hispanics “born in the United States with both parents also born in the United States. (Suro & Passel, 2003, p.2).

### **Who Are Second Generation Hispanics?**

One could easily argue that they are ‘hybrids’ (Lopez-Knowles, 2011) who somehow manage to live life in two worlds at the same time. Many of these second generation of Hispanics came as a natural “result of the arrival of more than 20 million mostly Mexican and Central American newcomers in a wave that swelled in the 1970s and soared during the 1990s” (Aizenman, 2009, para. 7). Currently, this “offspring of Hispanic immigrants now accounts for one of every 10 children” (Aizenman, 2009, para. 7). At the same time, this second generation of Hispanics is, according to Suro and Passel (2003), “still overwhelmingly young—nearly two-thirds is under the age of 18 years old” (p. 9).

The MRM Worldwide report (2008) accurately defines this second generation of Hispanics by saying that “we know that while American by birth, they have inherited many of the cultural attitudes that their parents brought with them as immigrants: they are bicultural, bilingual, and greatly informed by their Hispanic roots” (p. 18).

According to Roberts (2009) “the American-born children of at least one Hispanic immigrant parent—now accounts for 52 percent of the nation’s 16 million Hispanic children” (para. 5). By the year 2020 it is estimated that 70% of the U.S. Hispanic population will be U.S. born or second generation of Hispanics (MRM Worldwide, 2008).

### **Main Characteristics of Second Generation Hispanics**

Second generation Hispanics are sometimes also called the “bridge generation” (MRM Worldwide, 2008, p. 3) or the “Sherpas” (Lopez-Knowles, 2011) because they carry the load of being the interpreters and translators for their Spanish-speaking first generation relatives in matters pertaining to language, culture, and traditions.

Their households offer huge challenges. Aizenman (2009) points out that “forty percent of second-generation Hispanic children are born to parents who never completed high school. Only 12 percent have a parent with a college degree or higher” (para. 14).

This second generation of Hispanics, even though they prefer to use English as their primary language, still make an interesting use of Spanish that greatly differs from their first generation Hispanic relatives. A study by Suro and Passel (2003) clearly portrays these differences in language use which can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3

*Primary Language Used Among Hispanics*

Generation	Spanish-Dominant	Bilingual	English-Dominant
1 <sup>st</sup> Generation	72%	24%	4%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation	7%	47%	46%
3 <sup>rd</sup> + Generation	0%	22%	78%

*Note.* Table taken from a study by Suro and Passel, 2003, p. 8.

In the area of education Aizenman (2009) points out that second generation Hispanics “have the highest high school dropout rate—one in seven—of any U.S.-born racial or ethnic group” and that “these Hispanics also receive far fewer college degrees” (para. 10). Leticia Sosa’s (2011) findings reinforce this point. She found that from 100 Latinos or Hispanics that began elementary school only 46 graduated from high school, 26 enrolled in college, 8 graduated with a B.A. degree, only two earned a graduate or professional degree, and only 0.2 received a doctoral degree (p. 7).

Regarding income, second generation Hispanics make significantly more than their first generation Hispanics. In a *Current Population Survey* from the second quarter 2003, first generation Hispanics made \$457 in weekly earnings, while second generation made \$535, and the third generation \$550 (as cited in Suro & Passel, p. 9). Aizenman (2009) argues that the second generation Hispanics “make significantly less money than non-Hispanic whites and other second-generation immigrants” (para. 10).

In family matters, while first generation Hispanics tend to find their partners within their ethnic and racial groups, the second and third generations do not. Edmonston (2003) estimated that “only 8 percent of foreign-born Hispanics intermarry, compared to 32 percent of the second-generation and 57 percent of the third-plus generations” (as

cited in Suro & Passel, p. 9). A study made by MRM Worldwide (2008) found that the “average family size for second-generation Hispanics in the study was, moreover, 5.9” versus “6.8 for the first generation” (p. 17). Aizenman (2009) points out that second generation Hispanics also have the “highest teen pregnancy rate” (para. 10).

The culture of second generation Hispanics is highly influenced by the culture of their parents while keeping in touch with the American culture. Frank (2011) correctly points out that:

unlike earlier immigrant groups whose second generations tended to turn their backs on their ethnic cultures, even changing names to become more Americanized, younger Hispanics want to remain tied to their roots and so continue to eat ethnic foods while at the same time eating more traditional American fare. (para. 28)

Finally, it is important to highlight that this second generation of Hispanics “in general consumes more media (Internet, radio, and TV measured in hours) than the first generation and spends more time online than with any other medium” (MRM Worldwide, p. 17). They seem to be always connected to some kind of media, be it through phone, Ipod, or computer.

This second generation of Hispanics seems also to be secularized, and to place “more stress on material goods and social activities than on church participation and spiritual growth” (Gomez & Vásquez, 1998, para. 24).

This generation also has the pressures of living in two worlds simultaneously, the Latin American and the American world. The first is their parent’s world with its norms, ideals, culture, faith, and goals in life. But, since they need to construct their own identity, they often need to negotiate with their parents, which at times leads to “personal confusion and parent-child conflicts” (Gomez & Vásquez, 1998, para. 22).

All these characteristics of second generation Hispanics leads to a myriad of opportunities in ministering to them. More and more Christian denominations are seeing these opportunities and looking for ways in which to minister to their needs and bring them to Christ (Catholics, Baptists, and Adventists among others). Some go as far as to recognize that some of their pastors are lost in trying to minister to this second generation of Hispanics (Gomez & Vásquez, 1998).

### **Their Postmodern Mindset and Needs**

The WSDAC youth share with their peers many of the postmodern ideas about the world and the relationships that surround them. Unlike their first generation parents, their approach to life and its challenges is very postmodern.

The WSDAC youth seem to see and give value to everything through the glasses of relationships. For them, truly relationships are everything. This is especially true when those relationships involve their friends and family, which has high value for this second generation of Hispanics mostly from a Cuban and Colombian background.

Their relationship with authority is peculiar, especially with church leaders. They are willing to respect them only if they see them walking the talk, or really living what they preach. For young people, leaders need to earn their respect and leadership.

The WSDAC youth also have a high sense of justice and will react bravely against any signs of intolerance and injustice. While many adults will simply conform, the youth are willing to fight and make things different. Add to that emotions, which also play a high role in their lives and the recipe is set for challenging times.

Another characteristic of WSDAC youth members is the need to differentiate norms from principles especially in religious matters. Since first generation Hispanics are



usually more traditional and norm oriented, the youth find it hard to simply accept those norms if a biblical principle is not clearly seen behind it.

At the same time, the WSDAC youth are highly influenced by the Miami lifestyle. Many of them have a party mentality, are fun thirsty, and have a self-centered way of life. Some of them find it hard to resist their peer pressures and give into common youthful sinful practices. Many of them listen to the same music, see the same movies, spend their money and time, and have the same moral problems that the non-believing youth in Miami have.

The WSDAC youth also show a lack of true spirituality. Religion for many of them (as it is for some of their parents also) consists mainly in attending worship services on Sabbath only and then living their regular lives, with little spirituality throughout the week.

The WSDAC youth needs and wants true models of authentic and down to earth Christianity. They love to listen to good stories and, even more, enjoy seeing these stories as a real experience among them.

### Strengths and Weaknesses of the WSDAC Youth Ministry

The WSDAC had a visioning and discovering process meeting with its youth and the church leadership on July 1, 2007, at the youth room. Through it the youth were able to discover and analyze their strengths, weaknesses, and dreams. These points were pertaining to the youth ministry in the WSDAC only.

### **Purpose of the Discovery and Visioning Process**

The purpose of the discovery and visioning process was to uncover the hidden strengths, weaknesses, and dreams of the WSDAC youth. At the same time, it was felt that the perceptions of both, the youth about the adults and adults about the youth were not accurate and sometimes misleading, which led to some unnecessary problems. The ministerial team thought this process would give the opportunity for each group to listen, evaluate, and begin to work together. It was also thought it could be a starting point for developing a joint vision, a structure, and a plan of action for the WSDAC youth ministry.

### **The people Involved**

In order to have a good understanding of the youth and to secure a balanced group with which to work, people were selected by taking into consideration their responsibilities in the church and also their age group. For these reasons key members of the church board were selected and invited by the pastoral team to this meeting. Several teens, young adults, and parents of these youth were also selected to attend the meeting.

The ministerial team consisting of the senior pastor, Daniel Amich, and the associate and youth pastor, Denis Sand, planned and coordinated the whole event.

### **The Process and Instruments Used**

In order to ensure a balanced representation groups were pre-assigned. Each one had a church board leader (in most cases an elder), at least one teen, a young person (usually more), and a parent. This was crucial in order to give adults and youth equal opportunities to listen to each other and work together.

There were five groups formed and each one had a specific table to sit around and work. As people arrived they mingled, talked, and everyone showed excitement about what was coming. People were seated in the pre-arranged groups and general instructions were given on how the process would go.

In the first part of the meeting a presentation was made from Luke 14:28-30 along with an urgent need to build a strong youth ministry that would be capable of attending to the needs of WSDAC youth. Then each participant received two forms and a pencil that were to help them in uncovering the strengths, weaknesses, and dreams of our youth (see Appendix F).

This first part was designed to discover the strengths and weaknesses of the WSDAC youth ministry. After carefully analyzing the instructions each person was given time to write what they considered their strengths and weaknesses. Then each person had to share with the group of six people what had been written.

Each group then had to analyze and summarize its findings into four major strengths and weaknesses. Each group gave a report to the rest of the groups. Groups posted their finding on the walls and after rearranging them by similitude, all the groups agreed on four major strengths and weaknesses.

A similar process was followed to discover the dreams. People were asked to imagine being in the year 2012 and describe what they saw, felt, and heard as they considered the youth ministry of WSDAC. Each person wrote ideas and then shared them with the groups. The groups summarized their key points, and posted them on the walls. This time the group members were asked to vote for their priorities regarding their dreams and visions.

The meeting closed by designating a group of youth who would work at a future time in fleshing out the key findings and turning it into a vision and mission statement.

## **The Results**

In order to better understand the findings the results will be presented in three main areas: Strengths, weaknesses, and key vision points. After those are analyzed two additional results are discussed.

### **Areas of strength**

The first of the strengths uncovered was the strong Pathfinder ministry that the WSDAC had. Unanimously, youth and adults agreed that this was their biggest strength. The club every year had from 70 to 80 people enrolled and was recognized at the conference level as a model club. This was the result of a very well talented and organized leadership who were very committed and creative.

The second area of strength was the existence of a youth worship service (which the youth called ‘youth church’) aimed at the youth. This worship service functioned weekly in the youth room and took place at the same time as the regular worship service in the main sanctuary. Among the key differences with the main service was the major involvement of youth in the program, having English instead of Spanish as the main language spoken, and the more contemporary music and program styles.

The third strength was the youths’ willingness to work. It was seen that the youth of the WSDAC were not only willing to participate but were eager to give their talents to God and his church. This was seen in the good disposition the youth had shown and in the many successful programs they had run just recently.

The last strength was the good leadership the youth had. People present felt the youth had a great group of young adults and adults who were not only very capable but also always willing to work with the youth. It was also felt that this had been key to the functioning of Pathfinders, the youth worship service, and the Friday night program for the Adventist Youth.

#### Areas of weakness

The weaknesses discovered clearly showed the urgent needs the WSDAC had with its own youth. The first area of weakness uncovered was the lack of support the youth felt from the adults in the church. Even though they were allowed to have a parallel worship service they felt there was little else in the way of support and that most people in church were even questioning if that service should continue.

The second area of weakness discovered by the study was the lack of spiritual growth of the youth. Groups realized that even though there were many programs offered, the youth did not seem to be growing in their relationship with God. This was a major concern in which both youth and adults present agreed. Both groups wanted to see a change in this area and felt the youth needed to be challenged and helped to grow spiritually.

The third of the weaknesses discovered was evangelism. People agreed that programs were not helping in reaching other youth for Christ. At the same time the youth saw evangelism more like an event, or as a week of meetings to which one could invite people to. It was sensed that only children of the church were being baptized.

The last area of weakness uncovered on July 1, 2007, was the lack of vision and purpose the youth ministry seemed to have. People present sensed there was a huge need

for being able to clearly point out the real purpose for the WSDAC youth ministry. It was perceived that this lack of clarity and purpose was crucial in making the youth ministry relevant and successful. At the same time, those present agreed that the process in which they were participating was a right step in clearly defining purpose and vision.

#### Vision key elements

After analyzing the strengths and weaknesses the meeting concentrated on finding the key elements for a shared vision. There were five main areas that the people present felt were crucial for a preferred future of the WSDAC youth ministry.

1. The top desire for a preferred future was having better spirituality among the youth of the church. Those present felt that without this key element all the other things would make no sense and would only create empty programs and people. With this, they also meant youth who would not only have a strong relationship with God but who would also live what they believe.

2. The second area in which they wanted to grow was evangelism. It was pointed out that the youth needed to learn to understand and practice evangelism as a lifestyle. It was also evident that the youth needed a way in which to reach their own friends and acquaintances or the church would become irrelevant and self-centered. They wanted their youth to be evangelistic and successful in reaching other youth for Christ. New methods of evangelism are needed in order to reach the postmodern mindset (Bruce, 2003).

3. The third top desired area as a preferred future had to do with worship. Those present felt that the youth ministry needed to be strong in its worship services. At the same time that it needed to be relevant to the youth with a postmodern mindset. It was

also desired that English should continue to be used in leading the youth's worship services.

4. The fourth area in which they dreamed of is in seeing the youth of the WSDAC greatly involved in ministry. By this they meant involved in using their God-given gifts to serve the church and the community around it. It was sensed that in the future the church needed to find other ways in which to involve more youth in serving God and people.

5. The last area with which the youth dreamed of was of having a better building in which to meet for their youth worship services. This was because at the time they were meeting in the youth room, where many people came in and out, with much noise and distractions taking place, and where there was little seating available due to the increasing number of people coming. They felt there was a big need to grow in reverence, which could be more feasible in another physical setting.

#### Other results

Another result of that visioning meeting was the formation of a small committee that had to work on a mission and vision statement for the WSDAC youth ministry. They finally arrived at a mission and vision statement based on the preferred futures that had been discovered. Their mission statement was "to reach, love and prepare hearts for heaven," and the vision statement read "to be a joyful youth full of the Spirit of God that are united in love, growing in Jesus, serving with passion, praising with fervor and sharing the good news of salvation".

At the same time, and as a later result of this visioning and discovery process, a new structure for the WSDAC youth ministry was developed that contemplated

organizing teams around those most cherished dreams and areas in which it was thought that the youth needed to grow (see Appendix I).

### Youth Involvement

The WSDAC youth mainly participated in the programs organized and ran by the youth leadership of the church, such as Adventist Youth on Friday nights. Participation of the youth in other church programs such as prayer meeting was almost non-existent.

One of the most attended programs has been Pathfinders. With its strong organization and leadership the Westchester Club every year has between 60 and 80 Pathfinders. Several times they have won state championships in Drums, Drills, and Bible Bowl.

In the year 2006 the WSDAC board voted to have a youth church that was to operate in the youth room. It mainly meant having a weekly and dedicated Sabbath worship service aimed at the youth. By July 2007 the attendance to this service was in the 60s. The average attendance for the months of August through November 2008 was 101 people. On November 3, 2009, the WSDAC in plenary sessions voted to have a youth service led by the youth aimed at the second generation of Hispanics at the sanctuary. The average attendance for the ALIVE service in the months of March through August 2010 was of 131 worshipers.

In 2007, the youth participation in church leadership primarily was in the youth department. Some of them were seldom invited to co-lead worship services. There were two young people on the church board, both as elders for the youth.

The youth involvement in evangelism was essentially limited to the youth inviting people to come to the youth services and to the twice-a-year-held evangelistic meetings



of the whole church. Evangelism was seen more as an event or programs to which to invite people to. At the same time, the youth participated on a quarterly basis in feeding the homeless and visiting the elderly in nursing homes.

### **Summary**

The WSDAC has an urgent need of involving its youth in Christian ministry and leadership. By doing this they will be able to prepare their own youth for leadership, reach their friends for Christ, and fulfill God's mission. The challenge is big, but the opportunities are paramount and well worth the risk.

## CHAPTER 5

### DEVELOPMENT OF A YOUTH LEADERSHIP

#### SMALL GROUP PROGRAM

In this chapter the three main areas of the project for the development of youth small group leadership are presented. First, a description of the program with all the main components and the reasons for each one is set forth. Second, this chapter addresses the implementation of the program at the WSDAC with the different steps taken. Third, the chapter ends with an evaluation of the program.

#### **Description of the Program**

In order to better understand the program for the training of youth small group leaders the first section of this chapter addresses the purpose of the program. Then, the training modules are presented which include the experiential, theoretical, and self-guided modules. Each module aims to help the leader into becoming a more holistic person. Lastly, the organizational structure of the program discusses the backbones of the small group movement.

#### **Purpose of the Program**

The program has a fourfold purpose. The first is to holistically develop the WSDAC youth to “be,” to “know,” and to “do.” The “be” part involves becoming all God has made and wants them to be, helping them grow in maturity and Christ-likeness. Then

the “know” is the goal of understanding the call and/or mission from God and the vision of the work with small groups. The “do” part of being the leaders of real groups is presented after the “be” and “know” purposes.

The second purpose is to help the youth go beyond today’s prevailing self-centered living and to reach out and witness to those in their circle of influences. For that reason the program includes tools on how to reach their friends for Christ, how to share their testimonies, etc.

The third goal of the program is to transform the youth from spectators into authentic spiritual leaders who are doing real and meaningful ministry. The small group leadership training, and later the actual leading of the group, provides ample opportunities to discover and meet the needs of those with whom they come in contact with.

The last goal and purpose of the program is to provide the youth with the opportunity to experience life as God intends it to be, in missional communities. This simply means experiencing the joy of real and authentic Christian community while fulfilling together God’s given mission of making disciples.

Authors McLuen and Wysong (2000) argue that “if you are serious about affecting lives, then you need to create ways for young people to be stretched and challenged. One way to do that is to develop an effective student leadership program” (p. 21). I believe one of the best ways to develop the youth is through small group ministry and leadership. Icenogle (1994) claims that “small groups will never grow into their full God-gifted potential unless there are key church leaders who intentionally empower other good small group leaders” (pp. 90, 91).

Projects need names and successful movements need a new ‘wineskin’ with a clear identity to help them move forward. After analyzing different names people give to groups, I chose the name Growth Groups because it better described the purpose and vision of reaching out and edifying our youth. At the same time, God is very eloquent in wanting his followers to develop and reach new heights for his honor. Last, the name Growth Groups also seemed more appropriate for today’s postmodern youth who are eager to grow, and who are searching for identity and belonging.

### Training Modules

Since learning is more caught than taught, I wanted to have a good combination of theory and practice in the training. For that reason I decided to have three modules that would run at the same time: the “experiential training module,” a “theoretical training module,” and a “self-guided module.” Each one will be considered in more detail.

#### **Experiential Training**

The purpose behind this module was to give the future leaders the opportunity to experience firsthand how a group works. At the same time, they were to practice how to lead all the parts of a successful and holistic small group meeting. For that reason they were invited to form part of this first group that would meet in my house.

The experiential training started with our first Growth Group meeting on July 9, 2008, at my house. It was purposely scheduled to begin some days before the theory module. This first group also met for lunch many Sabbaths before the theory training. They also spent a weekend together (September 13 and 14, 2008) on a special retreat for training and community held for future Growth Group leaders at Florida’s Keys.

The leaders in training also had the opportunity to practice different skills (like reflective listening, witnessing, etc.) throughout the training modules. Leaders also worked in pairs for the completion of some requirements. This helped them grow by giving them the opportunity to keep each other accountable.

The practical and experiential training module was encompassed in what we called the “Practicum” (see Appendix A). In one sheet of paper all the requirements of the programs were laid down, with the dates for completion for homework, visits, and practices. With this, the future leaders had a clear picture of all that was required for them to do. Each point clarified whose signature they needed to get to complete it.

At the end of each of the theoretical training sessions, the requirements that were due the following week were once again refreshed and clarified. This was also the time for signing the completed assignments.

### **Theoretical Training**

While the experiential training occurred mainly in homes, the theoretical took place mainly at the WSDAC facilities. The first theory session started in the afternoon of Saturday, July 12, 2008, at 4 p.m. Usually, the future Growth Groups leaders sat around one big square formation of tables that helped to have a face-to-face discussion.

The training started with prayer time, followed by the session being discussed that day. I presented all the topics in this first stage. Later on, when the first group multiplied into three groups, I started to share the load, allowing the most experienced and passionate leaders from the first group to teach the second generation of leaders. In doing this I was preparing the future coaches for our Growth Groups structure.

After prayer, each session continued with a key passage of scripture for that session. Each person had written notes to fill in as the presentation took place. There were intense moments of open discussion among all present that brought vitality to the sessions and filled our training with humor and a practical understanding of groups.

The theory module was organized under three main areas: Knowing, being, and doing. I told them this is basically what they needed to know, be, and do. Under each one of these three areas were the ten leadership training sessions. This is a brief overview of each one of them under the three main areas:

The knowing area of the training involved only one session (#1) under the title “The dream’s basics.” I chose this title because, as Icenogle (1994) says, “Leadership is about having a dream; it is about being open to the dream God has given an individual or group” (p. 87). In this session there is an explanation of what Growth Groups are, our vision for each person, the meaning of the name, and an explanation of the Growth Group’s logo. The key text for Growth Groups (1 Thess 2:8) is analyzed here; and it serves as the basis of our philosophy of not only giving the gospel but also sharing our lives as the family of God. A big portion of session #1 aims to provide an answer to the question of the ‘why’ of small groups. There are 14 reasons presented for having small groups: (1) the divine model—created for community, (2) growth takes place better in community, (3) relationships are naturally built, (4) the potential of small groups is seen in history, (5) it worked throughout church history, (6) a natural way of doing evangelism, (7) the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, (8) it is part of our history as Seventh-day Adventists, (9) eschatological significance, (10) church growth research confirms it, (11) the example of contemporary churches, (12) better assimilation and

retention of new believers, (13) development of leaders, and (14) the inspired counsel by Ellen G. White.

The second area of the training, the “being” part, included two sessions (#2, #3). I decided to include this area because in many small group trainings that I have come across, trainers mainly concentrate on the areas of knowing and doing, but not on teaching how crucial it is to become the person God wants the leader to be. I believe that you cannot give what you do not have (John 3:11), and that you can only give what you have received (John 3:27). White (1956) wrote that “we cannot give to others that which we do not ourselves possess. It is in proportion to our own devotion and consecration to Christ that we exert an influence for the blessing and uplifting of mankind” (p. 37). Icenogle also claims that “small group leadership is about becoming the whole person God wants each person to be” (1994, p. 87).

Session #2 was entitled “A holistic spiritual leader” and dealt mainly with the biblical idea of a leader. Five images of a biblical leader were analyzed, followed by the qualities of a spiritual leader. Then there was a short analysis of leadership and how God shapes leaders, and the advantage of having co-leaders in groups. This session ended with the job description of a Growth Group leader. This portion had several appendices that encourage the leader to evaluate him or herself spiritually, discover the areas in which to grow, and to make a plan to actually change. It also included a section written by Ellen G. White that deals with Christ’s devotional life.

Session #3 analyzed the characteristics of the kingdom led person which includes kingdom priorities, the new identity, purpose, and motivation. This session contained specific help for the leaders on the need to be organized, planned, and disciplined. In

addition, there was a section on how to make good use of God-given resources which includes time, treasures, talents, and temple. In the appendix of session #3 there were several pages of suggestions on how to live a healthier, more simple and organized life.

The next section of the leadership training program was about “doing” and encompassed sessions #4 through #10. In this last section the leaders received the necessary skills to successfully lead the life of the group and the weekly meeting.

The first session of the “doing” part is #4 which had the title: Lead Group Life. This session reflected the main philosophy of small groups which goes far beyond having a 90-minute weekly meeting and into the need of learning to live life in missional communities. Leaders can see how Christians are called to live life completely different and the advantages of having group life. Group life is what happens during the week with the people of the group. The goal of group life is to become the family of God in our neighborhoods, work places, and schools. This session included the roles that each one needs to play in order to see their groups grow.

The next session #5 was entitled “Lead a Meeting” and described the goals, the participants, and the structure followed in the Growth Group meeting. Each meeting’s basic order follows the 5 Ws: Welcome, worship, word, works, and wasting time. The word time is an opportunity for open discussion and discovery. This session also discussed the role of the Bible and the leaders at the meeting, while providing guidelines on how to facilitate the discussion making sure the ratio of talking is as close as possible to 30% the leader, 70% the group members.

Session #6 had the title “Organize,” and presented how crucial it is for the leaders to have a clear vision and to share it constantly with their group. At the same time it



discussed the stages of group life, gave practical ideas on how to organize them, and help them move forward as they grow, and reach multiplication.

“Relate” was the title of session #7, which invited the leaders to consider the need humans have of deep and meaningful community. It addressed the basics of group dynamics and the keys to successful communication. At the same time “Relate” calls leaders to be transparent and to improve their listening skills.

Session #8, “Make disciples,” was the evangelistic part of the training. The basic principles on how to reach the lost were discussed, while providing practical ideas on how to invite and reach friends. There was also a section on how to lead someone (or the person’s circle of influence) to Christ, with suggestions on how to share personal testimonies and areas to study with friends who want to know Jesus. In addition, there was a good discussion on Matthew parties and how to use them in Growth Groups outreach.

In session #9, “Care and Grow,” the leaders were directed to the responsibility to edify and help group members mature in Christ. There was also a call and clarification of what it means to care for the flock God has given them within their groups. In the appendix of this session there is a survey of spiritual gifts that leaders need to complete in order to discover and better use the God-given capabilities.

Last, session #10, “Multiply,” set the clear goal of the groups, which is to bring abundant fruits for God’s kingdom. God not only desires growth but expects it from his followers, so healthy groups are expected to make disciples, grow, and multiply every year. The emphasis is placed on the development of new Growth Group leaders. Trained leaders will give birth to new groups, which would help more people give their lives to

Jesus and become themselves disciples who, in turn, will reach others. This is in essence the principle taught by Paul in 2 Timothy 2:2. In the appendix there is an explanation for leaders of what Growth Group coaches do and what can be expected from them.

### **Extended Training**

The last section of the training gave all of the future leaders the opportunity to expand their knowledge and understanding of small groups. Leaders in training were given several books and materials to study and consider on their own. Some were for the sole purpose of helping them to mature in their Christian life (the “be” part of the training), while others offer them knowledge and practical insights on how to do groups (the “do” part of the training).

On the “be” part, in order to hear from Jesus’ closest friend how He really was, they were given and expected to read the gospel of John in booklet format with no division of chapters and verses and a yearly Bible reading plan. On the “do” part they received the book *How to Lead A Successful Cell Group Meeting* by Joel Comiskey; *Bridges 101* by Ruthie Jacobsen; *Studying Together: A Ready-Reference Bible Handbook* by Mark Finley; and the *Serendipity Bible for Groups* edited by Lynn Coleman.

### **Organizational Structure**

A successful small group movement needs a good organizational structure that will not only support it but help it in the growth process of multiplication and expansion. The next sections will present the leadership structure, the role of the adults and youth in groups, and the organization chosen for our Growth Groups in WSDAC.

## Leadership Structure

God led me to meditate on the words of Solomon that “two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work,” that “if one falls down, his friend can help him up,” also, “if two lie down together, they will keep warm,” and “though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves (Eccl 4:9-12). I saw from the Bible the need and advantage of co-leaders for our Growth Groups. Then I read White’s comments on how Jesus sent the 12 and the 70 disciples out by twos. She then admonishes in the book *Desire of Ages* (1898) that “it was the Saviour’s purpose that the messengers of the gospel should be associated in this way. In our own time evangelistic work would be far more successful if this example were more closely followed” (p. 350).

I decided that regardless of the cost and the availability of leaders, each group leadership team was to be composed of at least two trained co-leaders. Even though there always seems to be a shortage of leaders available, the benefits of having co-leaders greatly surpass the cost of finding and training them. Some of the benefits are: shared responsibility, reduction of chances of burning out, training of future leaders, better care of members (four eyes, ears and hands can always see and do more), sharing of responsibilities, and greater possibilities to “sort the tension out” (Greggo, 2008, pp. 231, 232).

At the same time these leaders need someone to care for them and give them appropriate advice when necessary. For that reason all leaders are under coaches who care for them while also helping them grow and to multiply their groups. This is in essence a Jethro model of care, also called “5 x 5,” where one coach cares for up to five groups and its leaders.

## **The Delegation of Leadership**

The delegation of leadership in groups is a crucial element in small groups. In doing it with youth groups proved to be a challenge, especially when considering the participation of adults and youth. On one hand is the opinion of an experienced youth pastor, Fields (n.d.), when he writes advocating for adults to lead youth groups:

Now is the time to develop adult leaders. I'm confident you can move ahead with students leading the small groups, but I'm just as confident that they won't materialize to be as healthy as groups led by adults. Adults intersecting the lives of students is the backbone of any healthy youth ministry. (p. 40)

On the other hand is the reality that Comiskey (2003) describes when he writes:

In many places around the world, student-led cells are exploding. The International Charismatic Mission has 9,000 youth cells meeting weekly in homes and campuses and 20,000 in the weekly youth rally. Yet many in North America resist the notion of student-led cell groups. (p. 377)

I believe that in order to turn our youth from spectators into fully engaged participants of ministry the youth needs to be trained and allowed to lead groups under the supervision of capable small group coaches. Early on, with the Growth Group leadership, we adopted the policy of having leaders who were "a bit older than the majority of the group members" (Comiskey, 2003, p. 381), but allowing some exceptions depending on the maturity of the leaders. This rule was especially used for the early teen and teenager groups. Over time adjustments were made when it was seen necessary.

By December 2010, after several generations of training of leaders, multiplications, and having the youth program for developing small group leaders adopted by the whole WSDAC, there were 12 groups led by adults for adults, and 14 groups led by the youth and for youth. Of those led by youth for youth, 7 were led by young adults, 5 by teens, and 2 by early teens.

## **Implementation of the Program**

The program had to go from paper to reality and for that purpose it was crucial to implement it in the most appropriate way. This section of the chapter describes the pre-launching stage with the major and previous groundwork. It also describes the launching stage with the actual beginnings of the program. Following the launching stage is the expansion stage which describes the internal growth of the groups. The extension stage describes the multiplication of the program. Last, the chapter will end with the coaching stage of the program which gave the much needed support and vision to all the leaders and their groups.

### **Pre-Launching Stage**

Before the program could be launched there were some crucial steps that needed to be carefully taken to secure the future of the program. This included protocols and the recruitment of future leaders. This whole process was filled with prayer and fasting.

### **Protocols**

The first step in the process of adopting the program for the training of small group leaders was consulting and receiving feedback from the senior pastor of WSDAC, Daniel Amich. In April 2008, I presented to him the overall idea and details of the proposed program. We continued discussing and adjusting the program during the following months. Each time we met he showed that he was very supportive, gave suggestions, and encouraged me to move forward and present it to the youth and church boards for consideration and approval.

The second step was to present the project to the youth board. I presented the vision, philosophy, the details of the program, and even an estimated budget on April 6.

They accepted the idea and were ready to embrace it. The final vote was taken on May 11.

The third and decisive step was the presentation of the project to the church board, which took place on June 9, 2008. I explained the challenges the youth were having and the need to transform them from spectators into players. With the support of the senior pastor and some clarifying questions the board gladly approved the project.

### **Recruitment**

The phase of recruitment started a long time before I talked to the future leaders. At the beginning of April I wrote a list of 30 people that I consider good candidates to invite to the training. I was looking mainly for true Christians who were committed to God, responsible, available, with initiative, and willingness to be taught.

I decided to pray and allow God to lead me in the selection. By April 28, after much prayer and observation, the list had been reduced to 14 and later on to 12.

I personally talked to each one in private and told them of my prayers and how God had led me to choose them. I also told them what I saw in them, what I admired, the potential they had in God's hands, and how I valued their work and devotion for God. I shared the overall vision for starting our groups and invited them to join the vision of starting Growth Groups for our youth. I asked each one of them to pray for a week and confirm with God if this was His will.

After that week, I talked to each one again to see the results of their prayers and if they had received confirmation from God. They all said they were willing and thrilled to participate.

## Launching Stage

This section of the chapter includes the development of the prototype group, the acquiring and transmitting of the right DNA for small groups, the practices the leaders did in the actual group meetings, and the dialogues used to coordinate the discussion.

### **The Prototype Group**

After studying about how to begin groups, I decided to follow Boren and Tillman's (2002) advice of having a prototype group that would later multiply into several groups. The prototype group met weekly in my house on Wednesday nights to experience group life and was able to practice the things they were learning together in the theoretical training. I decided to call these practical meetings "touch & feel GG."

The first Growth Group meeting took place July 9, 2008, at 8:30 p.m. and was attended by nine future leaders plus my wife Ingrid and I. We had a total of 11 of these meetings before we multiplied the prototype group into three Growth Groups.

### **Acquiring the Right DNA**

Each human being has a different and unique DNA. Parents share some of that DNA with their offspring. This information passed on is what makes children have some key characteristics in common with their parents, but parents can only pass what they possess.

The same principle applies with groups. If one desires the small groups to have certain characteristics it is crucial to model them and have them present in the first or prototype group. For that reason I was very careful with leading the group meetings in my house because the future leaders would get their DNA from what they saw and experienced there. The nine leaders were to experience it and internalize it before they

multiplied. The key elements or the essential DNA for them to take were: real group life, format of the meeting, dialogues instead of teaching, reaching the lost for Christ, transparency, pastoral care, accountability, and fellowship. Because of the need to model group life, we ate together often on Saturdays after the worship service, went on a spiritual retreat as a group, and tried to spend as much time together as possible. The group started to feel and be a spiritual family. This group needed to be holistic in nature in order to go beyond a regular Bible study or 'mini church' experience.

### **The Small Group Meeting Practices**

Every week the group meetings gave the leaders in training an opportunity to experience a different role. For the first four weeks I led all the parts of the main program consisting of the five Ws (Welcome, worship, word, works, and wasting time). But then, and according to the plan, potential leaders were assigned different days in which they would be practicing each one of those parts. They all had the opportunity to actually organize and lead each of the five Ws. After the group meeting was over all the leaders in training gave constructive feedback to the ones that lead that day.

The rotation of roles in the leadership proved to be a great blessing. It also included calling each one of the members and reminding them of the meeting, the role they had that day, what they needed to bring, and words of encouragement.

I need to note that for future launches it is recommended to take more time emphasizing and especially modeling evangelism. This needs to include Matthew parties, personal invitations, a blessing list, prayer visits, Bible studies, etc. What we did was not enough for leaders to really learn it, believe it, and practice it as a lifestyle.



At the same time, after several weeks of meeting in my house the group began to move to the houses of the leaders. They were to prepare the place, and set the ambience as they had been instructed.

After the initial prototype group multiplied, the Growth Groups had freedom to meet any day of the week and at any time because people have different challenges and possibilities of getting together. We have had groups meeting as early as 5:30 a.m. and others starting late in the day at 9 p.m. and finishing around 11p.m.

### **Discussion Sessions: The Dialogues**

A crucial element in the development of a small group program is deciding the most appropriate material to study in the group meetings. After careful study and consideration I chose to create a weekly study for the group which I called “dialogues”. The name was chosen to emphasize that this was to be completely different from a regular Bible study, a class, or a sermon. By March 2011, I had produced 120 dialogues.

Understanding that the prototype group and our final target were mainly composed of postmodern youth, I decided to make the study of the Word relational and inductive. Bruce (2003) argues that “the primary purpose of small interactive groups is to create a sense of family involvement. This is an experience that most postmodern persons have been denied, for the most part, in their own families” (p. 38).

Since Stier (2002) said that postmodern teens are “more experiential than logical” (p. 188), and knowing that those teens he talked about are now the young adults that I am trying to reach, I decided to open the meeting for lots of dialogue and sharing. The leaders received a list of questions that they were to study, adapt, and share with the group to foster open discussion.

Doing groups with the purpose of evangelism among postmoderns also requires careful thinking and planning. Bruce (2003) argues that:

because postmodern thinking focuses on the individual and his or her relationships with other individuals, postmodern evangelists methodology must incorporate personal experience, relationship building, and individual spirituality. Hence, postmodern thinking evangelists use what is called 'relational persuasion. (p. 37)

I saw the need to give the Bible a central role in our meetings. The Bible was to be opened, read, and commented on openly from the beginning. Since today's youth love good stories (Stier, 2003, p. 190) we purposely chose to concentrate on one story each time instead of jumping from one end of the Bible to another to prove a certain doctrine or belief. When the section to be considered was not a story, the whole periscope was selected.

These dialogues played a huge role in the growth of the people because they provided opportunity for the youth to think for themselves in trying to find answers to the issues presented in the stories. It gave them a chance to read, analyze, and even question what the Bible said.

At the same time, it provided a chance for the youth to be open and talk about their own faith, with the challenges and doubts they may have. It also helped them to practice how to defend their beliefs and question those other's had. The whole process of listening, interpreting, analyzing, and sharing stimulated their spiritual muscles and helped them to be more mature.

### Expansion Stage

After the initial launch the group needed to expand bringing internal growth and transformation. The spiritual disciplines, dialogues, interaction along with accountability, and the study of the Word of God were key ingredients for healthy development.

## **Internal Growth Testimonies**

People participating in Growth Groups started to experience growth in different areas of their lives. On one hand those who were leading the groups were growing as capable spiritual leaders. When they realized they were called to be the priests and pastors of their little flock, they also started to offer pastoral care for those in their groups.

Several of them started to tell me how their spiritual lives had improved and they had a renovated relationship with God. At the same time, parents of the youth were really aware of their spiritual renewal and very supportive of the whole program.

## **Areas of Growth**

I wanted to see a balanced growth in our youth especially in the areas of worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and evangelism. I had emphasized these five areas in the theory training with our future leaders and the results started to become more evident.

Groups grew in singing, giving testimonies, and praising God for what he was doing in their midst. They also started to do more service projects and to meet the needs of those attending the group meetings. People were inviting their friends to the meetings and there was a constant flow of visitors coming to most groups.

## **Transformational Growth**

Through the dialogues members participating were being challenged week by week to apply the principles that were being discovered. The goal was not simply sharing information, but to invite and challenge for transformation.

The first to be transformed were our own youth who started to see through the Bible that God wanted them to change and be part of the fulfillment of the mission of

reaching the lost world for Christ. It was clear that the WSDAC youth were now starting to see the importance of living out their faith throughout the week. Even their conversations showed their change in priorities and focus in life.

At the same time visitors realized how much hope and peace the group meetings were bringing into their lives. Spiritual interest was aroused in visitors who wanted to know more and participate more fully in this new found hope. Many of them expressed a desire to study the Bible and to get to know Jesus more. Leaders coordinated with other group members the giving of Bible studies to visitors during the week.

### **Incorporating the Spiritual Disciplines**

In order to develop spiritual muscle and be trained for godliness (1 Tim 4:7) I incorporated some of the spiritual disciplines in the training of the future leaders so they in turn would be able to share it with their own groups. During the week of the training of the new leaders they were invited to fast and pray every Tuesday asking for God's direction and blessing upon their lives (see Appendix C, Training Calendar).

I had purposely chosen topics like prayer, the study of the Bible, and fasting, for consideration in the dialogues as a way to foster the practice of the spiritual disciplines. At the same time in the section of 'works' in the meeting program, I also included for the leaders to invite their groups to practice some of these spiritual disciplines with their own groups. Also the groups regularly practiced thanksgiving, singing, and intercessory prayer.

### **Developing new Leaders**

I taught in the leadership training that in order to have multiplication the key and defining factor is not the number of people attending the group, but instead having new

leaders trained and ready to launch their own groups. Trained leaders will bring more people to their groups, help them grow, and to multiply again.

For that reason every year since 2008 in WSDAC there are scheduled trainings for new leaders of groups. In 2011, one began at the end of January and the second one began at the end of May. This provides the leaders of the groups with an opportunity to see who are the most promising and willing people in their groups to send to the new training and be ready for the upcoming multiplication in September. Since the groups in WSDAC have multiplied very often, the need for new trained leaders is high and constant.

### **Attracting new Visitors**

In order for groups to grow there needs to be a constant influx of new visitors. It is crucial then to invite and reach those that are around our members.

In Growth Groups the *Circle of Influence* chart has been utilized, where people are invited to write down the names of relatives, friends, and acquaintances. From each person's list names are taken to form the 'blessing list,' for which the group will pray and work in reaching them for Christ.

Because visitors come from the circle of influence of the people in the groups, there is always a good number of visitors in Growth Groups. In the week of March 29 to April 4, 2009, there were six groups meeting with a total attendance of 49 people, with 9 visitors in these groups (18.3% of visitors). In the week of August 23 to 29, 2009, there were 37 people present in 5 of the 6 groups, with 10 visitors (27%). By the week of November 14-20, 2010, there were 16 groups that met, with a total attendance of 126

people, of which 88 were Adventists and 38 were visitors (30.15%). As can be seen the percentage of visitors grew steadily.

One of the best things to attract new visitors is through Matthew parties. These are parties designed with a final goal of serving the kingdom of God. In them, members invite their non-Adventist friends or acquaintances to a party where people socialize, eat, and share what is going on in their lives. There is no Scripture reading or a specific spiritual activity besides the prayer for blessing the food. Lots of people have been contacted and then brought to the regular group meetings through these kingdom parties.

Another way in which groups have received new visitors is through the ALIVE (Abundantly Living In View of Eternity) worship service, which is a worship service of the WSDAC especially designed for reaching the second generation of Hispanics with a postmodern worldview. Each week through the 'connection cards' and the sermon notes people are invited to join a Growth Group.

### Extension Stage

The next stage of the leadership development program for Growth Group leaders was the extension stage which included helping groups move through the stages of group life, preparing and planning multiplication, developing leaders, and sending them out.

### **Moving Through the Stages in the Life of the Group**

It is a well-known fact that groups go through different stages in their group life. Several small group authors (Comiskey, 2001; Boren & Tillman, 2002) divide these stages into four: (1) forming stage; (2) storming/norming stage; (3) performing stage; and (4) reforming stage.

In order to help the GG to grow, leaders were instructed on the stages of group life during the training. Later on they were helped by the GG coaches to move their groups towards the goal of multiplication. If a GG does not progress through these stages, it is giving unequivocal symptoms of being an unhealthy GG. Depending on the stage the group was, different activities were suggested to help them advance to the next stage.

### **Planning Multiplication**

The key of the success of the Growth Groups at the WSDAC was the emphasis on multiplication of groups. During the training of the leaders they were all encouraged to never talk about dividing their groups, but instead multiplying them. This is not a play on words, but instead a reflection of a deeper philosophy and final vision for Growth Groups.

All groups were encouraged and challenged to multiply at least once a year. It has become a practice at WSDAC to plan a mass multiplication in September of each year. Since multiplication is a clear goal, careful planning of activities like Matthew parties, birthday parties, and development of new leaders is required.

If a group is ready for multiplication before the common multiplication date, they multiply regardless of the time of the year. But if after a whole year of meeting and working a group is not ready for multiplication, an exhaustive evaluation and dialogue takes place with the leaders, and extra time is given. If the group does not multiply after the extra time and another evaluation, the coaches decide if the group needs to be dissolved and assimilated into fruitful groups.

## **The Story of the Multiplication of Growth Groups**

In order to better understand the process of extension it is necessary to consider the development of groups from day one until now (Appendix D, History of GG multiplication in WSDAC). The first group met for the first time on July 9, 2008, and it was the prototype group consisting of nine people. Three months later (October 1, 2008), that first group multiplied into three groups each one being led by three leaders. After another round of 10 sessions of training, by January 2009, those three groups multiplied into six groups. Then came another set of training sessions and by September 2009, those 6 groups multiplied into 12. Again the same process of training new leaders was repeated and after a whole year, by the end of December 2010, there were 26 groups in WSDAC.

I must also add that in this process of training and multiplying leaders of Growth Groups, pastor Jorge Rojas decided to be involved with the Margate SDA Church. He and two of his youth took the 10 sessions of training used at WSDAC and then they in turn led the training and the planting of seven groups in their own church. That church has since given birth to a cell church that currently has four new GG.

## **Dedication Ceremony**

Groups extend themselves by multiplying into new groups. When new leaders have finished their training and are ready to begin their own groups, the Growth Group leadership has for them a dedication ceremony. This simply means taking a few minutes on Sabbath morning, in prime time, when the whole congregation is present to recognize the new leaders for finishing the sessions of the training.

The pastoral team, and sometimes the church elders, come up to encircle the new group leaders and dedicate them to God, for His protection, wisdom, and passion for



reaching souls for Christ kingdom. This is also used as an opportunity to show the congregation the centrality of doing groups in our WSDAC.

### **Small Group Birthday Parties**

The multiplications of groups are celebrated because by doing so groups extend their reach and influence. Since 2009, the Growth Group leadership team has organized an annual birthday party. This is an occasion to celebrate what God has done in the last year. It is a time for testimonies that inspires new groups to work hard to accomplish the mission. This is also a time for recasting the vision of multiplication, of reaching the lost, of preparing a people for the second coming of Jesus.

All groups are invited to the celebration that includes singing, praying, studying of the word of God in groups, and, of course, a huge cake. The occasion is also used to recognize the leaders for their hard work with their groups. At the same time, the new leaders are presented with a certificate of graduation and a *Serendipity Bible for Groups*.

### **Coaching Stage**

In order for groups to continue growing it is crucial that leaders count the blessing of having coaches. In this section I present the reasons for coaching, and the role coaches are to play with the leaders and groups.

### **Reasons for Coaching**

Groups need coaches. The reasons behind it include:

1. There are special needs the group leaders have. Some of these most important reasons include: leaders personal needs (like to be shepherded), for motivation and discouragement, for deficiencies in their spiritual nutrition, personal problems, need of

confrontation due to hidden sins, or to deal with the Elijah (I'm the only one doing right) or Absalom syndrome (pride and I can do it better) (Sand, 2010, 1:2).

2. There are group needs: the history of Methodism, bands, and the circuit rider showed to be crucial in maintaining healthy groups. Coaches can help leaders with their limited experience, in preparing for multiplication, in preventing disasters, and in troubled ministry of cell group members.

Small group writer Egli (as cited in Neighbour, 2006) in his PhD work studied the topic of coaching in small groups. He says that his "research involved 3000 small groups in 200 churches. The findings clearly demonstrated the most important factor for long-term success with small groups: the participative coaching of small group leaders" (p. 13). Icenogle (1994) also believes that "small group leadership is only as strong as its primary models and coaches" (p. 90). And Comiskey (2010) agrees with both of them when he writes:

Coaching keeps cell ministry healthy, like a well-tended garden. Without it, weeds will surely take over and drain the needed nutrients. No matter where you are in your cell journey, consistent coaching is essential for long term health and fruitfulness. (para. 10)

### **Role of the Coach**

After studying the topic of small group coaching, I decided that in WSDAC the coaches' role would involve mainly four areas: One on one, huddles, group visits, and training.

The first responsibility of the coaches was to have 'one on one' meetings with leaders where they would be able to give them pastoral care, see the state of his or her spiritual life, and help them mature in Christ. This meant being close to the leader especially when the leader is hurting, facing challenges, or needing confrontation. The

second area involved helping organize and lead Growth Groups leader's huddles. These are monthly meetings which have the goal of giving continual and formal training, and opportunity to share testimonies, to give troubleshooting advice for groups, and a fellowship time among group leaders. The third area involves visiting groups to see how things are going, recognizing leaders before their groups, and providing helpful feedback to leaders about the functioning of their groups. Lastly, coaches have the responsibility of helping in the formal training (the 10 theory sessions) offered at least twice a year in the church facilities. This has proven to help them grow as they teach others about groups.

Each coach oversees between three to four Growth Groups with their co-leaders. The whole structure can be more clearly seen in Appendix E. In order to be a small group coach in WSDAC the person needs to have been a leader of a successful Growth Group, have multiplied his group at least once, and completed the Growth Groups Coaches Training (Sand, 2010).

### **Evaluation of the Program**

The last section of this chapter presents an evaluation made to the leadership development program. It includes an analysis of the number of groups, number of leaders trained, and the ministry of the these groups.

#### **Number of Small Groups**

Before the beginning of the youth leadership development program for small group leaders the WSDAC had three adult small groups functioning on a weekly basis. The youth had no small group dedicated to them up to that point.

The Growth Groups started among the youth in July 2008 with one group, and continued to function under the youth department until November 2010. By December

2010 the Growth Groups in the WSDAC encompassed not only the youth but the whole church and had one director with two sub-directors for the entire GG ministry.

After two and a half years of work with groups, the GG ministry had groups dedicated to early teens, teens, young adults, couples, adults, and intergenerational families.

By December 2010, there were in total 26 groups in WSDAC, distributed in the following way: Adults groups 9, young adults groups 8, teens groups 5, early teens groups 2, intergenerational group 1, and couples group 1. It is also important to note that most youth groups were conducted in English while the adult groups were in Spanish. In total there were 14 groups in which the main language used was English, and 12 groups in Spanish. In reality, anyone attending any of the youth Growth Groups would soon realize that at any point the language used would be ‘Spanglish’ because they would switch from one to the other very often and naturally.

#### Number of Leaders Developed

The first training for Growth Group leaders was started in July 2008, the practical part on the 9th and the theory part on the 12th. That first training had nine people who took the initial training and became the first generation of GG leaders. These leaders were the ones mostly responsible for transmitting the GG DNA to the next generation of small groups.

These nine leaders started leading their own groups in October 2008. In total there were 3 groups, each group having 3 co-leaders. The leaders of these 3 groups suggested the names of the most promising people they had in their groups as candidates to take the GG training. The second generation of leaders had 6 people completing the training for

future GG leaders. Each new generation took all the theory training sessions (10), plus the practical and expanded training.

The third generation of leaders started their theory training in June 2009. There were 14 people who took this training. This third generation was crucial for reaching the goal we had of having twelve GG by September 2009. We had two early teens (one 13 and the other 9 years old) taking the training in this third generation because we saw the need to plant early teen groups among our youth. This early teen group became very fruitful in baptisms and also in the multiplication of new GG. From this group three new groups were born in the next generation.

The fourth generation of GG leaders started to be trained soon after the multiplication of our groups in September 2009. By October we had 12 more people who were recommended by their GG leaders and coaches to take the GG leader training. This new generation included some people from other nearby churches who had become interested and wanted to begin their own groups. There were two SDA pastors who asked permission to take the training along with some key people they would bring along.

By this point, the Hispanic Coordinator of Florida Conference, Pastor Abel Paulin asked me to translate the training manual for GG leaders to Spanish so it could be used with all the Spanish-speaking churches of the conference. This manual with its 10 sessions became available in January 2010 for the whole Florida Conference opening the doors to even further expansion.

Pastor Jorge Rojas took the whole training with two youth leaders from his church of Margate. They became trainers themselves and soon started their own prototype group,

led the 10 sessions of training and started 7 new GG in their church. By 2011, they had planted a new cell church, based on Growth Groups.

When the time came for the fifth generation of GG leaders to be trained, and having the WSDAC embrace completely the GG idea, the pastoral team saw the need to have two sets of trainings at the same time, one in Spanish and the other in English. The newly translated GG training manual in Spanish opened the door to train leaders in their own language. In March 2010, there were 23 people who took the training in Spanish and another 15 who took it in English. The theory training was given on Friday nights and Sabbath afternoons. This fifth generation of leaders began a new era of groups. Now it was not something only the youth was doing, but the entire church as a whole. The GG philosophy had permeated the church board and the participants in both worship services.

The sixth generation of GG leaders had 7 people in the training and was given in English. Since there were more youth groups than adults, the youth needed to develop more leaders to fill the new multiplications that were in process. At this generation of GG leaders there were two leaders who had come to a group as visitors, from a non-Adventist family, who were now being trained to become leaders of groups. In one year they have gone from visitors to members, and now from members to GG leaders.

The seventh generation of leaders started at the end of January 2011, offering again training for GG leaders in Spanish and English. There were 13 who took the training in English and 5 more in Spanish. In the English group there was another young adult who had been baptized on December 25, 2010 and was now being prepared to lead a GG at Florida International University (which is located half a mile away from WSDAC and on the same street).

As can be seen in Table 4, there have been 104 people in total who have taken the GG leaders training program up to March 2011. Each new generation of leaders have taken the 10 sessions and worked on the practical assignments to complete their training. Most of these leaders currently serve as leaders of Growth Groups in WSDAC and other nearby churches.

Table 4

*Number of Growth Group Leaders Trained*

Training generations		Date training begun	GG Leaders trained
First		July 2008	9
Second		October 2008	6
Third		June 2009	14
Fourth		October 2009	12
Fifth:	English	March 2010	15
	Spanish	March 2010	23
Sixth:	English	September 2010	7
Seventh:	English	January 2011	13
	Spanish	January 2011	5
TOTAL			104

From the beginning the training of Growth Group leaders was sponsored by the youth department of WSDAC because it had grown under its wings. By 2010 the program had grown so much that the cost was already high, so in December 2010, a budget was presented to the church board for obtaining funds for the training of future Growth Group leaders for the whole church. The cost for training each Growth Group leader was \$43.52. By the grace of God donations to the youth department had made possible to offer free training and materials up to that point to 86 small group leaders.

## Youth Leadership Involvement

Previous to the launch of the program for developing small group leaders the youth had little involvement, especially in reaching others for Christ.

As an example of involvement, before the initiation of Growth Groups, WSDAC senior pastor Daniel Amich and I had been talking about the total absence of youth in prayer meetings. After trying many different approaches none worked. It seemed as if their religious experience was encompassed only by the Sabbath hours. Now, they are actively involved during the week, calling their friends, supplying their needs, leading the group meetings, and training others to become leaders of groups.

One young adult who now co-leads a group approached me one day to thank me for Growth Groups. He told me that it had helped him grow in his relationship with God like nothing else, and that he was now considering devoting one year to serve as a missionary. That was even more amazing considering that only a few months before all he wanted to do was to play video games all day long.

Three young adult leaders planted a new group (45 minutes away) for second generation Hispanics in the house of the co-worker of one of them. In the year 2010 and after a whole year of hard work and Bible studies, five members of that group were baptized, which included a former agnostic. Two of those newly baptized took the Growth Group leadership training and are now leading their own group.

There are many stories of transformations, of sins confronted, and ungodly habits abandoned. Those participating in Growth Groups have gone from spectators to ambassadors for Christ and his kingdom. They have also found a safe place where they



can invite their non-believing friends to come, participate, and experience God and his Word.

In summary, the purpose for which the GG leadership development program was created has been fulfilled. The training module with its experiential training, the theory training and extended training has help each one of the leaders to grow, mature, and become effective spiritual leaders. The structure of the groups with the delegation of responsibilities among adults, young adults, and youth in general has proven to be effective. The implementation of the program brought new challenges and possibilities in preparing the groups for success. Groups grew internally by expanding themselves as the people invited new visitors, as they were being transformed, developed, and prepared for new group leadership. Then groups extended by multiplying themselves into many more new groups. Lastly, the coaching provided by experienced GG leaders gave the needed support and encouragement for the leaders and their groups.

Without any doubt Growth Groups has been a great blessing for the WSDAC, the youth, and their circles of influences.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this investigation was to study, develop, implement, and evaluate a small group leadership training program to involve the youth of the WSDAC. The main goal was to train the youth in becoming leaders of successful small groups and help them reach their friends by bringing them to Christ. This chapter is divided in two sections. The first is the conclusion which presents the findings in the context of the problem along with my personal reflections. The second part of the chapter deals with recommendations for those interested in furthering the study in this particular area.

#### **Conclusion**

This project began with a study of the theological basis for a meaningful youth ministry and the study of a successful small group ministry. Through the life of Samuel, Josiah, and Timothy insights were gained from a biblical perspective of youth ministry. The study also looked for meaningful principles in the OT for small groups. Through the ministry of Jesus Christ and his first group of disciples more lessons about groups were brought to light. Lastly, the NT presented further instruction on the reason, purpose, goals, and role of groups.

The literary review helped to see how throughout history small groups have been a preferred method used by God and his church for the advancement of the His kingdom. From the Old Testament and throughout the exile with the formation of house

synagogues, and up to the early Christian church the evidence of the advantages of having groups was undeniable. The early church fathers started to take the church away from the divine plan, and Constantine took it even further by adopting the Cathedral model and elevating the role of the priests. But there were small groups always meeting throughout the pre-reformation, reformation, and post-reformation. Even Adventism had some form of them with good results.

Even though there are different small group models from which one could chose, the analysis showed that groups ought to be more than just another program of the local church or a simple weekly meeting for Bible study. For that reason the training must be solid, practical, and experiential.

The project was developed, and later implemented with the launch of the prototype group. Groups expanded growing internally as their members grew in maturity and commitment to God. Later, groups extended by multiplying several times into more groups. The program was evaluated by looking at the number of leaders developed, the number of groups planted, and the commitment of the youth involved.

The research has brought to light different findings that are surely helpful to others who may want to learn from this project.

Some lessons have been learned from the youth of WSDAC. Contrary to what many think the youth are tired of being entertained and tossed about with events and programs to attend. They desire to grow, mature, and be trained for the purpose of Christian ministry. They want to learn real practical tools that will help them be the ambassadors Christ has called them to be. At the same time it is very interesting to see how they openly talk about their spirituality (which it is harder for adults to do), their

doubts, fears, hopes, dreams, and even practices. The youth show they have deep spiritual needs that they want to fill with Christ, and not necessarily with organized religion or church rules. They want and long for an authentic and real faith experience.

I found that young people in general, and WSDAC youth in particular, are also very passionate in pursuing a goal but only when they have embraced a vision and believe it is worth it. I have seen them become passionate and willing to use all their energy and resources to make it happen. I have also witnessed many of them making sacrifices for a cause they believe in.

Young people want to learn how to live their lives in meaningful community. Even though they have grown up in the very individualistic and self-centered American culture, they long for deeper relationships. They have a need to belong and certainly GG has given them this opportunity.

I have also been amazed at how the youth can become great leaders of small groups. Even though some would recommend not using youth as leaders, I believe and have seen how the advantages of using them as leaders greatly surpassed the risks. Young adults are simply great material for leadership and have proven to be very responsible and focused. Teens are more volatile, but under good coaching they can also co-lead groups. Early teens have amazed me on their ability to invite friends and share their faith without reservations. Early teens proved to be very eager to learn, grow, lead, and multiply their groups.

Through Growth Groups I have seen youth grow and mature in like no other place. Because they were trained and then released to practice what they had learned, their faith was challenged, and they had to investigate and prove by themselves what they

believed. Placing youth in the front lines is without any doubt the best way to make them strong, outreach focused, and committed to Christ.

There are also some findings about the adults in our WSDAC. They certainly want and love to see the youth involved in real ministry. They do not spare praise when they see their sons and daughters working to reach others. Furthermore, parents will go the extra mile to help their kids, teens, and young adults fulfill the mission as leaders of GG. I have seen them giving rides to theirs and other children, buying tons of food, cleaning, explaining passages, helping hold Matthew parties, and waiting for hours until their children finish the meeting or the GG leadership training.

An interesting finding was that even though adults are very supportive of their youth, that does not necessarily mean that they are willing to change their views and learn from the youth. It is as if most adults were saying that is good for the youth, but they do not think they need to do it themselves. Sadly, for some parents the Growth Groups were just another good program for their children, they didn't understand the full vision behind the program. They saw the benefits of having their children involved, growing, and reaching their friends, but were not willing to adapt their own busy schedules and lifestyle to a more biblical pattern of doing life.

Sadly, it seems that some parents of today's youth, just want the church to have programs that would keep their offspring busy, doing something, as long as it does not touch them. This approach to the religious life can be very disappointing for those who are truly committed and passionate about doing groups as a lifestyle.

I also learned through practice that adults, and especially parents, need to be well informed about what is going on with the groups and their children. Any changes need

always to be carefully addressed and explained in advance to the parents.

The third area of discoveries had to do with the Growth Groups. After using GG for two and a half years in WSDAC there is no doubt that they are an excellent way of involving youth into ministry. Many of the youth were not involved in any other church activity, and now they not only participate but lead these groups.

GGs are also one of the best ways of reaching the lost for Christ. There were 10 baptisms alone in 2010 that came as a direct result of the youth groups work. There is no doubt that relational or friendship evangelism is the best way to reach others. GG gives the youth the opportunity to invite their friends to a non-threatening environment (usually a home they already know) and share spiritual realities. The Matthew parties organized by the GG have also helped in this sense because they are even less non-threatening to unbelievers. These Kingdom parties help to build bridges, to open doors, and give an opportunity to unbelievers to see real Christians alive and having fun.

Growth groups have also helped the youth lose the fear of reading and interpreting the Bible. Through the questions in the dialogues, each week they had the opportunity to discuss what the passage meant, and what would it mean to apply it to their own lives. It is simply amazing to see the youth GG leaders (as young as nine years old) read and discuss with unbelievers what God is telling them, and what it would mean to practice it.

Another interesting fact was the level of retention of the topics analyzed in the weekly group meetings. In my contact as a youth pastor with them during the week the youth would refer to me the things they have studied two or three weeks and even months before in their own GG. They usually said, “We studied that in my GG and we agreed

that...,” and the opinions would follow. I am sure they do not remember my weekly sermons so well.

Growth Groups also greatly helped in keeping youth accountable. Many times church leaders and pastors do not know what the youth do during the week, but their friends do and since they are usually part of the same group they keep each other accountable. I have seen it, heard the prayers, and received the concern of leaders asking how to confront some of their group members about their behavior. Groups help the youth grow in holiness and to realize that their weekly life is an important part of their spiritual journey with God.

At the same time, the youth have learned to take care of those in their groups. This is also called pastoral care. Leaders have led the way and their groups have learned that in the family of their group they need to care for each other. Young adults have provided a place to stay for a couple of weeks to one of them who suddenly lost his place. All came with the renovated sense that “we are a family and we need to take care of each other.”

The format of the meetings and especially the dialogues with the questions for discussion were highly regarded. The youth, especially with the postmodern mindset, loved the possibility to talk, discuss, argue, and disagree in different topics. At the same time they appreciated the use of one main story or section as the topic for discussion instead of jumping from one end of the Bible to another to prove a belief.

It was also found that Growth Groups work better when the leaders are a bit older than the rest of the members of the group. This was especially the case with the teenager groups and not so much with young adults. In addition, groups reach more easily their

full potential when there is effective coaching taking place. Effective coaches proved to be a huge blessing for GG leaders and their groups.

Growth Groups benefit from having a common date for multiplication of their groups. It was observed that this gives groups a clear goal and a definite day to aim for. It also created a healthy peer pressure because the excitement of one group moving into multiplication pressured others to do the same.

Several things were clear in the findings about the leadership training for youth small group leaders. It was clear that the best approach is to unite the theory part of the training (the 10 sessions) with the practical and more experiential part (the practices in the groups). The practices would help make the theory more meaningful, and usually after the practices future leaders would come up with many theory questions on why this and that, and how could they do certain things.

Another area that was brought to light was the importance of having a solid up-front training. GG leaders want to have the necessary tools to lead their groups before they begin. This helps prevent dissatisfaction, frustration, and burnout of both the leaders and their groups.

At the same time, it is crucial not to extend the training for too long. Even though it is necessary to have time to study and practice the fundamentals of small groups, holding them too long will prove detrimental. Leaders need to learn and then be immediately deployed. It also helps the future leaders to have a clear calendar with a definite beginning and end for their training. I found that there is great danger in waiting for leaders to do everything as desired or even perfect before they start leading their groups. They become better swimmers when they are in the water.



After doing the GG leadership training in Westchester several times and attempting different formats, I believe it is good to include in the calendar of the training a retreat for those taking it. At that event several sessions can be studied (which shortens the total length of the training), people get to know each other better, it functions as a memory maker, helps to build a sense of team, and gives a final commitment to the vision of Growth Groups.

It was also found that in developing GG leaders the most important characteristics are not the age, gender, nationality, or level of education, but instead the willingness to learn, love, serve, change, work, and be guided by God.

Since the GG multiplied often and grew rapidly (from 1 to 26 in two and a half years), there was a constant need for new trained leaders. It seemed we could always use some more leaders. Coaches and leaders were constantly looking for promising new people to send to the training. I learned that this was the crucial element in which to concentrate in order to multiply groups.

Another discovery was in regard to the funding of the training of small group leaders. The Growth Group leadership team early on decided that the trainings of leaders ought to be kept free for the participants. The more material and training that was given, the more donations that were being received by the sponsoring Youth Department of the WSDAC. Money proved not to be a problem, because God knew, provided, and people give when they see a vision worth giving for.

The GG leadership training also proved to be an excellent way of developing leaders for the church. Even though the main emphasis of the GG leadership training was on developing leaders for these groups, the fact that the training had two sessions on

“being” helped the youth learn and grow as persons and ultimately as leaders. I believe the WSDAC will benefit from these youth leaders for many years to come, and I would not be surprised to see these GG leaders taking the most prominent leadership roles in the coming years. The reason for this is that leadership is mainly influence, and these GG leaders are growing day by day, outside of the temple building, in their influence with other members, and with the unbelievers who are accepting Christ.

The last consideration about the GG and leadership training is the capability of the program to turn a visitor into a new leader of a group within a year. There were three cases in which visitors (with absolutely no Adventist background) came to a group, studied the Bible, desired baptism, came to the training of GG leaders, and were co-leading their groups that same year. That is going from harvest to worker in the kingdom of God.

The last area of findings has to do with some of the challenges faced in doing Growth Groups and training the leaders for those groups. For some leaders it is hard to internalize and see the difference between doing groups as a program and doing groups as a lifestyle. They may say they understand and believe in it, but still talk and act as if GG were only another program. It seems to me that the Adventist church in general (and Hispanics even more) has become so dependent on programs that it is hard to think and see things without them. But the high emphasis on doing programs and running events has taken all the time people had available and placed them in what happens inside the walls of the building we call church. By doing this people are left with no time to do real ministry outside of the church walls, for people who are not from church and are in desperate need of Christ. It is hard also for the leadership to understand the need to

simplify the myriad of ministries in order to free the people to do ministry.

Another challenge is the conflict between the call to do group life under kingdom priorities and the very individualistic, selfish driven, entertainment-oriented lifestyle many Christians have in these days. The pursuit of the ‘American dream’ makes people think they need to have things, participate in, and experience this and that. Sadly, as Boren (2010) says, “The reality is that church people work just as many hours per week, watch just as much television, spend their money in similar ways, and have just as many family struggles as the unchurched” (p. 45). Groups and leaders have to deal with these challenges and still call people to pursue God’s call to live in communities that are missional (Boren, 2010).

There is also the challenge of helping adults and youth see and become willing to risk and change. Doing Growth Groups presents the challenge of changing the way people usually live, but for some that change is not only not necessary but also too risky and costly. Doing groups has a huge price and risks, like being vulnerable, learning how to live with others, allowing others to keep us accountable, and simply to go out of our comfort zone.

### **Recommendations**

There are several recommendations to others that might be interested in applying the methodology used in WSDAC in developing youth leaders for their small groups.

While thinking of duplicating the methodology in other churches it is crucial to identify the principles behind the program utilized. These principles will prove to be more useful than the many details of how the program was run, and besides, trying to apply the details without the understanding of the principles behind it will be worthless. It

is crucial for that purpose to study the topic of small groups and then define the vision as God may be leading. Extract the principles found in this dissertation and more clearly seen in the training manual, and apply them in the future groups. It is important to realize there is a great difference between starting groups from scratch and in reforming the ones already functioning. In this whole process the role and commitment of the pastoral team, and more specifically, the senior pastor is crucial.

Another suggestion is to have a prototype group when launching groups from scratch. It is important to let that first group get the right DNA, and experience real and meaningful group life for an extended period of time.

It's also vital to emphasize that evangelism is the thing to do in Growth Groups, and that GG are just the vehicle for it. There is no real success without evangelism.

In order to have healthy growing and multiplying groups for many generations it's absolutely crucial the involvement of the Senior pastor. Nobody else can replace his role in supporting, promoting and constantly casting the vision of Growth Groups.

Growth Groups will work better if the church is not 'program based' and more cell church oriented. All resources (human, monetary, and time wise) would better help to fulfill the mission.

I also recommend creating a system of GG leadership training that takes place during the whole year. This would provide enough leaders for future multiplications.

It is also important to have a strong coaching structure especially when doing youth groups. Youth GG leaders need the support, encouragement, and accountability that experienced GG coaches can provide. For that reason it is crucial to create and have a GG coach training in place to assure the quality of the coaches.

I would recommend several areas in which more study and research would prove beneficial. The first is the need to develop a good GG coaching training program to ensure successful leaders become great coaches. This would help in keeping the quality, preparation of the coaches, and the final success of the whole GG.

The second area for further study is in preparing dialogues that take into consideration the stages of group life. With these tool groups would be able to navigate through the stages and move forward from one to another until reaching multiplication.

The third area is in group life. More study is needed on what it means to have real and meaningful group life. Too many groups are satisfied with a 90-minute weekly meeting, and are missing the blessings and potential of learning to live 24/7, as the family of God.

The fourth area for future development is in creating an equipping track tool (in the form of booklets) that would help leaders move their visitors into leaders of groups. It means giving the leaders the possibility to invite the visitors to a journey that would take them from where they are (just visiting) to become committed members of Christ family (through baptism), and then group leadership (GG training).

Personally, I consider it a great privilege to have been allowed by the WSDAC to do this research. It has greatly surpassed my expectations. I never thought the manual that I developed to use with the youth in WSDAC would become the training manual for all Hispanic (and soon English-speaking) small group leaders in Florida Conference. This project has proven to be very challenging but greatly rewarding, especially in seeing the youth become the army of workers that would finish the proclamation of the Three Angels Message before the Lord's return.

**APPENDIX A**  
**GROWTH GROUP LEADERSHIP TRAINING MANUAL**



## Growth Groups Leadership Development Program

Westchester Adventist Church, Miami, Florida, USA

[www.GrowthGroups.net](http://www.GrowthGroups.net) - January 2011

by Pastor Denis Sand

"We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us." 1 Thessalonians 2:8

**The joy of missional community**

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Dear leaders:

For several years in the Florida Conference we have been working to promote cell groups as a way of life and as the platform of the ministry of the Church. Since coming to our Conference, Pastor Denis Sand, has been making a valuable contribution to this effort.

This instruction manual was written by him in English for the dual purpose of assisting in the preparation of its Growth Group leaders among the youth of the Westchester Church and to be part of his thesis for the Doctorate in Leadership courses in Andrews University. At the same time, it is very timely because it comes to fill a need that we have had for a time.

We are grateful to Pastor Sand for permission to translate and make it available to those pastors in our conference who are interested and committed in forming holistic groups that grow and multiply as the fundamental strategy of their ministry and to fulfill the mission of the Church.

It is important that we make the following comments about their use:

1. This Handbook should only be used in the preparation of holistic group leaders. Do not use to teach seminars to church on Saturday afternoon, or as material for the Prayer Services.
2. When used, note that the theory provided is only part of the preparation that the leader of the group needs. Therefore, this course should be taken only by people who are experiencing in their lives what it means to be part of a holistic group.
3. It is prohibited to make full or partial copies of this material that should only be acquired through Pastor Denis Sand or the Florida Conference.

The experience of young people in Westchester shows that, if applied conscientiously, the principles found in this manual can serve to mobilize the vast majority of the Church in the mission of making disciples. Pastor Sand began with a group at his own home in August 2008. In September 2009, the youth of the Westchester Church had formed 12 groups. Now they are working and praying to have 24 Growth Groups by September 2010.

I invite those who will use this Instruction Manual to carefully and thoughtfully apply the principles taught here. We trust the Lord that the experience of growth and multiplication of disciples will also be ours in the Apostolic areas of our Conference.

Pastor Abel Paulin  
Vice President and Coordinator of Hispanic Ministries  
for the Florida Conference of SDA  
January 2010

## Acknowledgments

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Thank God, the sovereign ruler of the universe, who has deigned to join us in each of the GG meetings. To Him I give all honor and glory for what He has done and is doing with the Growth Groups.

Thanks to all those pastors and writers who shared, directly or indirectly, their findings and ideas. You will find many of their ideas in this training manual and when appropriate, I mentioned their names for the invaluable contribution they have made to the development of leaders.

Thanks to Ingrid, my wife and friend, for your support and patience in this long process. Without your support it would have been impossible.

Thanks also to the Hispanic Department of the Florida Conference of SDA, whom through Pastor Paulin and his painstaking secretaries, Irma, Luz and Ximena, have supported and made a reality the realization of this project.

Thanks you leaders! Yes, you the tireless leaders of the Group Growths (GG) in Westchester. You have been the inspiration, and those who have helped develop this manual. You are the ones who have tested, critiqued and refined all this stuff. Thanks in a special way to Gloriam Gonzalez and Luis Tuñon, the two coaches of our GG, who have so far multiplied their groups three times. Your dedication and commitment is an example for all.

## Before you begin the journey

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As you can imagine, the Growth Groups Leadership development program that you have in your hands is not the result of a sleepless night. It is actually the result of many prayers and countless hours spent researching different sources, analyzing the principles presented in the light of divine inspiration, of adapting and testing whether they work in our context, of adjusting details, of writing, teaching and re-writing.

Much was learned by investigation, tests and by committing many mistakes. We learned while we were being directed by God to do things that we don't fully know how they came to be.

This training material arose from the need to train the youth what would lead the GG at the Westchester Church in Miami. These ten sessions have been used in leadership development since August 2008 to the present, being taught entirely, up to this point, eight times in Westchester, once at the Margate SDA church and twice in Kyrgyzstan. Each time it is presented again, some new details are introduced, others removed according to what the Lord is showing and directing. So this is not a finished work but only a work in progress with many areas to improve and grow. So feel free to adapt, modify according to the needs of your church and group. And please, if the Lord shows you a better way to do something, let us know so we can use us too.

The purpose of these sessions is to raise an army of workers, children, youth and adults, that would be capable of finishing the work which our Lord has given us. The goal is to help develop disciples that make more disciples (Matthew 28.19), leaders and groups that would multiply in new leaders and multiplying groups (2 Timothy 2.2).

The ten sessions are divided into three parts according to what we want you to KNOW (session # 1), to BE (session # 2,3), and DO (session 4 to 10). But these pages are only 25% of your development plan as a leader. Here you will be invited to read, analyze your life, grow and mature. You can't give what you don't have! You can only give what you really have. For that reason you need to look to Christ and have a personal and real relationship with Him. The rest, will depend on your participation in the most important part of the training, the real life of a GG, what we call group life. There you will be able to experience the life of the group, and become God's family in your community (1 Thessalonians 2.8). Please join to have a full experience!

I strongly believe it's time we stop expecting unbelievers to come to our churches to meet the Savior. The time has come when we must bring Christ to homes, work, school, park, and coffee shops. God wants to use all those places so we can invite our friends, neighbors, schoolmates or work partners and share with them the joy of growing together in the Lord Jesus.

Furthermore, I firmly believe God is raising this army today and I want to challenge you, in the name of the Lord to be part of it. I pray that God will use this material to challenge and change your life, to get you close to him and to have a more intimate experience with Jesus.

Welcome to the Growth Groups vision and its Leadership Development Program!

Pr. Denis Sand, MDiv.  
Miami, January 2011



## Practicum – Requirements of the GG Leadership Development Program - Student

by Pr. Denis Sand, [sanddenis@gmail.com](mailto:sanddenis@gmail.com)

Before you begin this leadership development program we want to make clear what we expect you to complete. You see, your church is investing a considerable amount of money and time in you. We truly believe that you can become a great leader for the Lord Jesus. Below you will find the requirements that you must complete in order to finish this program and graduate. Please, carefully plan to read and complete everything. How much you will learn and reach depends on you! Keep in mind Luke 16:10, Matthew 25:39, and Luke 17:10.

Description	Find it at	Due date	Signed by	Completed (date)	Signature
1. Read the Gospel of John in 7 days	Bible/Booklet				
2. Read & answer questions on "Christ Devotional Life"	Session #2D				
3. Daily pray with GG partner for a week and fast one day	Session #2E				
4. Turn in the "Spiritual Growth Assessment Process"	Session #2A				
5. Finish reading the book "Steps to Christ"	Book				
6. Complete all lessons of "It is Written" and turn it in	Booklet				
7. Do a prayer visit	Session #4				
8. Finish reading "Christian Service" by Ellen White	Book				
9. Plan a whole Agenda for a GG based on: _____	Session #5A				
10. Complete the Spiritual Gifts Survey	Session #9A				
11. Evaluate the GG Lead. Develop. Program/Training	End of manual				
12. Lead all parts of a GG under guidance of GG leaders	Session #5				
a. Welcome					
b. Worship					
c. Word					
d. Works					
e. Wasting time					
13. Complete a meeting report with your GG Leader & partner	Session #5C				
<b>Finish all Practicum requirements 1-12</b>	-				
<b>Attend all 17 sessions of GG Leadership Dev. Program</b>	-				
<b>Ready for graduation:</b> (Graduation date: April 30)					



# Practicum - Student (example)



## Practicum – Requirements for the Leadership Development Program - Student

by Pr. Denis Sand, [sanddenis@gmail.com](mailto:sanddenis@gmail.com)

**Sample only**

The Leadership Development program we want to make clear what we expect you to complete. You see, your church is investing a considerable amount of money in you. We truly believe that you can become a great leader for the Lord Jesus. Below you will find the requirements that you must complete in order to finish this program and graduate. Please, plan careful to read and complete everything. How much you will learn and reach depends on you! Remember Luke 16:10, Matthew 25:29; Luke 17:10.

Description	Find it at	Due date	Signs	Completed (date)	Signature
1. Read the Gospel of John in 7 days	Bible/Booklet	2/5	Partner & Coach		
2. Read & answer questions on "Christ Devotional Life"	Session #2D	2/6	Partner & Coach		
3. Daily pray with GG partner for a week and fast one day	Session #2E	2/12	Partner & Coach		
4. Turn in the "Spiritual Growth Assessment Process"	Session #2A	2/13	Coach		
5. Finish reading the book "Steps to Christ"	Book	2/20			
6. Complete all lessons of "It is Written" and turn it in	Booklet	2/27	Coach		
7. Do a prayer visit	Session #4	3/5	GG Leader		
8. Finish reading "Christian Service" by Ellen White	Book	3/13	Coach		
9. Plan a whole Agenda for a GG based on: _____	Session #5A	3/19	Coach		
10. Complete the Spiritual Gifts Survey	Session #9A	3/26	Coach		
11. Evaluate the GG Lead. Develop. Program/Training	End of manual	3/27	Partner		
12. Lead all parts of a GG under guidance of GG leaders	Session #5C	4/9	Coach/Leader		
a. Welcome		4/9	Coach & Leader		
b. Worship		4/9	Coach & Leader		
c. Word		4/9	Coach & Leader		
d. Works		4/9	Coach & Leader		
e. Wasting time		4/9	Coach & Leader		
13. Complete a meeting report with your GG Leader & partner		4/9	Coach & Leader		
<b>Finish all Practicum requirements 1-12</b>	-	<b>4/9</b>	<b>GG Directors</b>		
<b>Attend all 17 sessions of GG Leadership Dev. Program</b>	-	<b>4/9</b>	<b>GG Directors</b>		
<b>Ready for graduation:</b> (Graduation date: April 30)			<b>GG Directors</b>		



## Practicum – Requirements of the GG Leadership Development Program - Instructor

by Pr. Denis Sand, [sanddenis@gmail.com](mailto:sanddenis@gmail.com)

Name	ATTENDANCE TO SESSION - DATE										PRACTICUM																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1. Gospel of John	2. Chrst devotional life	3. Prayer & fasting 1week	4. Spiritual Growth Ass.	5. Steps to Christ	6. Complete Bible studies	7. Prayer visit	8. Christian Service	9. Plan a Gg Dialogue	10. Spiritual gifts survey	11. Evaluate Gg training	12. Lead all parts of Gg	a. Welcome	b. Worship	c. Word	d. Works	e. Wasting time	13. Gg Meeting report		
COMPLETED																														

# GG leadership Training Evaluation



## GG Leadership Training Evaluation



Thanks for taking the time to analyze our Growth Groups Youth Leadership Developing Program through God's eyes. Please, tell us honestly **HOW WE ARE DOING** so we can better fulfill God's purposes:

I'm a: Early teen \_\_\_\_\_ Teen \_\_\_\_\_ Young Adult \_\_\_\_\_ Adult \_\_\_\_\_

EVALUATION	1 Bad	2 Regular	3 Good	4 Very Good	5 Excellent	N/A Don't Know
<b>A. Theory Sessions</b>						
1. The dream's basics						
2. A holistic Biblical leader						
3. A Kingdom led person						
4. Lead group life						
5. Lead a meeting						
6. Organize						
7. Relate						
8. Reach						
9. Care/Grow						
10. Multiply						
<b>B. Practicum</b>						
a. Requirements required						
b. Amount of reading						
c. GG Agenda						
d. Faith of Jesus						
e. Practice Leading parts 4Ws						
<b>C. Instructors</b>						
a. Knowledge of topic						
b. The way it was presented						
c. Length of sessions						
<b>D. The training helped me to grow</b>						
a. Spiritually						
b. As a leader						
c. Understanding of myself						
<b>7. General</b>						
a. Usefulness materials received						
b. Folder						
c. I'm better prepared to lead a GG now						
d. Would you recommend it as						
e. I want to lead a GG						
<b>E. Overall Gg Training Evaluation</b>						

In your opinion, what are GG Training biggest STRENGTHS?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

In your opinion, what are GG Training biggest WEAKNESSES?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

In your opinion, what are GG Training biggest OPPORTUNITIES?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

In your opinion, what are GG Training biggest THREATS?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

KEEP DOING the following:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

GROW specifically in the following areas:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any other suggestion? (We have extra blank sheets if you feel like writing more!)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



# GG Leadership Development Program

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



## **Session # 1 - The Dream's Basics! (to KNOW)**

### **Objective of session # 1:**

1. Give a general overview of the philosophy, reason and advantages for having GG.
2. Challenge potential leaders to join the GG vision

### **Materials needed for session:**

1. Bible, GG student manual, white board and markers, pencils and papers.
2. Computer, projector and PPT
3. A symbolic microphone (like a small bottle of water, a ruler, or a stuff animal)

**Suggested time for this session:** 90 minutes

### **Optional additional reading materials for the instructor:**

1. Burrill, R. (1997) *The revolutionized church of the 21st century*. Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research Center.
2. Icenogle, I. W. (1994). *Biblical foundations for small group ministry: An integrative approach*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

### **Today's program: Session # 1**

1. Welcome and prayer
2. Thanksgiving:
  - o Thank students for accepting the invitation and coming to learn and better serve God. Mention that today they might begin the best part of their lives!
3. Introduction of staff: Introduce staff coordinating the training and their responsibilities
4. Overview of the training: Explain the GG training program and the areas to cover
  - o Theory (10 sessions): 3 main areas: knowledge (1), being (2,3), doing (4-10)
  - o Doctrines (7 sessions): The 7 crucial beliefs (Scriptures, Sabbath, sanctuary, Second coming and 3 angels, State of the death, Spirit of prophecy, and Sanctified living)
  - o Practical: Practicum
5. Goals of the training: they will be explained in Session # 1.
6. Session's program: Explain the general program to follow in each of the theory sessions
  - o Introduction exercises (Welcome, song [optional], prayer, etc)
  - o Study of session (fill in the blanks, exercises, discussion in groups, etc)
  - o Question and answers
  - o Practicum's follow up: Homework!
  - o Prayer
7. Introductory exercise
8. Study of Session # 1
9. Questions and answers
10. Practicum's follow up: Homework!
11. Give out materials
12. Vision sharing
13. Prayer

## **Session # 1 - The Dream's Basics! (to KNOW)**

### ***Introductory exercise: (5 minutes)***

1. Have the symbolic microphone go around and ask people only to talk when they have it in their hands.
2. Say: Before we embark on this journey we need to get to know our fellow travelers. So please tell us three things: your name, what do you do for a living (profession) and one true funny thing about yourself that will help others remember your name (something funny or even embarrassing that you did in the past!)
3. The instructor shares first!

***Transition (you may say):*** Now that we know each other a little bit more, let's jump into Session # 1

### **1. Key Passage:** Read LUKE 14.28-30

### **2. What's a Growth Group (GG)?**

- a. **A GG is not:** "a club status, a clique, an organization, something static, a one day a week thing, a classroom, just a Bible study, a therapy group, a band of renegades, a prayer group, or even a task or ministry group." (Joel Comiskey, How to Lead a Great Cell Group Meeting, 14.)
- b. **A GG is** a group of people (3-14) who have decided to experience life together in the kingdom of God and meet regularly with the purposes of community, spiritual edification, missional outreach and multiplication, and is the most basic BUILDING BLOCK of the local church (Denis Sand, DMin. Dissertation).
- c. **GG are** "foundational to the structure and success of the New Testament Church. They are small enough to allow individuals to MINISTER to one another, use their spiritual gifts, and be DISCIPLED in the teachings of Christ. They are vibrant life-giving communities where pre-believers can watch loving and compassionate believers in action. And they are the front door for reaching a lost world for Christ." (Milton Adams, Growth Groups, 14).
- d. **Our dream and goal with this training:**
  - i. We want to help you grow and become an individual that:

1. As a disciple knows God PERSONALLY and follows His voice daily D
2. Knows his IDENTITY in Christ and pursues his PURPOSE in life D
3. Lives by biblical PRINCIPLES challenging others to do so W
4. GLORIFIES God with all his life W
5. Continually seeks for ways in which to SERVE with compassion M
6. Uses his GIFTS and takes advantage of God's opportunities M
7. Has a passion for leading all his RELATIONSHIPS to Christ E
8. Is a 24/7 INFLUENCER for God's kingdom E
9. Lives CONNECTED in love with those around him C
10. Is COMMITTED to his growth group and sees it as his family C

***Explain: The letters to the right in the above goals stand for the 5 purposes for which God created us:***

- D Discipleship
- W Worship
- M Ministry
- E Evangelism
- C Communion

- ii. Our goal with this training is not only to give you information or the skills for you to lead a group, but instead to challenge you to change, mature and be transformed into the image of Christ.
- iii. We hope this training program will help you to have a real and more intimate relationship with God.
- iv. Remember: you can't GIVE what you don't HAVE! You can't give Christ if you don't know him personally

### e. Our GG logo:

- i. Our logo reflects some of our key beliefs in Growth Groups
  1. GOD is the one gathering, supporting, and always present in our GG
  2. BELIEVERS are fully connected to God and to others
  3. NEW PEOPLE are brought into fellowship with God and believers
  4. ALL PEOPLE are cared by other believers
  5. ALL ATTENTION is on God, because we can only grow in Him



**f. Philosophy and Biblical Foundations:**

i. Our GG philosophy is based in some key Bible passages:

1. 1 THESSALONIANS 2:8 “We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our LIVES as well, because you had become so dear to us.” New International Version (NIV)
  - a. GG are a call to live our lives in missional communities, to become families where God is lived out 24/7.
  - b. GG exist to make more real disciples of Jesus Christ
  - c. GG are a delight and fill our lives with joy
2. 2 TIMOTHY 2:2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. (NIV)
  - a. GG are committed to sharing the full message given by God
  - b. GG are born and live to multiply themselves
  - c. GG work hard to train every person to become a GG leader
3. Hebrews 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (NIV)
  - a. GG are a divine mandate (remember that Christians at that time met in homes, and that Christians had no temples until the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century A.D.)
  - b. GG provide encouragement and the much needed support
  - c. GG is an end time movement that aims to finish the work entrusted by Christ.

**g. Emphasis and dimensions of the desired growth**

i. Every GG needs to GROW:

1. DEEPER by discipleship
2. LARGER by evangelism
3. CLOSER by fellowship
4. BROADER by ministry
5. HIGHER by worship

ii. Every GG will mainly emphasize evangelism, discipleship and community.

iii. The goal includes the multiplication of disciples and leaders

**h. Brief comparison between Traditional Small groups and Growth Groups**

- i. The following chart has the purpose of showing the contrast between the way traditional small groups are held and how Growth Groups are different.

Area	Traditional Small Group	Growth Group (GG)
<b>Main approach</b>	Modern mindset	Postmodern mindset
<b>Evangelistic approach</b>	Rational persuasion	Relational persuasion
<b>Cares for</b>	Propositional truth	Relational truth
<b>Focuses on</b>	Mind	Heart: Experience/Spirituality
<b>Method</b>	Teaching, information sharing	Inductive, discussion, and open dialogue
<b>Goal</b>	Convince, correct, point to truth	Total transformation of the person life's
<b>Emphasis</b>	Program oriented	People oriented
<b>Main question</b>	Is it true?	Is it real?
<b>Leader</b>	One	Never one, always 2 or 3
<b>Who can be a leader?</b>	Experts, good teachers, need to have all answers	Test: Can you blow a candle? Anyone!
<b>Expected of leader?</b>	Knowledge and good communication skills	Authenticity, transparency, and accountability
<b>Training of leaders</b>	Little training (usually one weekend, and mainly theoretical)	Balanced theoretical and practical training: Theory: 10 sessions covering what we want you to KNOW, BE and DO; Practical: practices in group.
<b>Coaching</b>	Sometimes and concentrates on the functioning of the group	All groups and leaders have an experienced Coach. Concentrates on the leader's spiritual health
<b>Multiplication</b>	Possible	Crucial and main goal. Expected once a year
<b>Group meeting</b>	2 hours once a week	Formally 2 hours a week, but usually greater in group life
<b>Bible study time in meeting</b>	Like sermon or Bible study	Interactive with open questions. Leader talks 30% and the group 70%
<b>Study</b>	Linear	Interactive and free flowing
<b>Place of weekly meeting</b>	House, church	House, park, coffee shop , work, school, beach, mall...
<b>Group life (what happens during the week?)</b>	Optional	Essential (24/7) to become the family of God, body of Christ and holistic.
<b>Fellowship</b>	Optional	Central aspect of the experience
<b>Pastoral care</b>	By church pastor	Every group member cares for others
<b>Ministry</b>	Encouraged, but optional	Crucial and according to gifts
<b>Duration</b>	3-4 months, or until reaping event	Long term (1 year or until multiplication)

### 3. Why should we have GG? Reasons and advantages for GG

#### a. We were created for COMMUNITY: The Divine model.

- i. God Himself is the best example of community. You only need two people for love to exist, but at least three are needed for community.

- ii. After the creation of mankind in God's image (Gen 1.26) the Creator stated: "It is not good for the man to be alone" (Gen 2.18). Man was created to have and enjoy community.
- iii. Sin destroyed community in its vertical and horizontal dimensions, separating Adam from God, Adam from Eve and both of them even from creation.
- iv. Christ came to earth to save and restore humans. He chose twelve disciples to be with him, to create the community of believers, his church.
- v. Jesus prayed for his disciples to have this kind of community (John 17.21-23)
- vi. Humans by design long for true community and belonging.

**b. GROWTH takes place better in community.**

- i. Contrary to what many have practiced for centuries, spiritual growth happens better when in contact with other people and not in isolation.
- ii. PROVERBS 27:17 As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.
- iii. We need imperfect, unbearable and problematic people to develop our characters and grow into Christ's image.

**c. RELATIONSHIPS are NATURALLY built**

- i. When someone from the group invites a friend to come he will definitely make sure all the other members of the group will get to know him.
- ii. By this, the visitor knows at least one person, and from there relationships can naturally grow as he gets to know the friends of his friend and so on.
- iii. No one is pushed to begin a relationship they simply develop naturally.

**d. The potential of small groups is seen in history**

- i. Small groups are recognized even by non believers as great tools to carry a message and bring transformation.
- ii. This potential of small groups is very well described by the great Cambridge historian Herbert Butterfield.
- iii. He wrote: "The strongest organizational unit in the world's history would appear to be that which we call a cell because it is a remorseless SELF-MULTIPLIER; is exceptionally difficult to destroy; can preserve its intensity of local life while vast organizations quickly wither when they are weakened at the center; can defy the power of governments; is the appropriate lever of prising open any status quo. Whether we take early Christianity or sixteenth-century Calvinism or modern communism, this seems the appointed way by which a mere handful of people may open up a new chapter in the history of civilization" (as cited in Comiskey, 1997, p. 27)

**e. It worked throughout CHURCH HISTORY**

- i. In NEW TESTAMENT times

1. Christ ministered in homes. Matthew 8.14-15; Mark 2.1-5; 2.15-17; Luke 8.51-56; John 12.1-3
2. Christ sent the disciples to homes. Matthew 10.5-13; Luke 10.1-7
3. Believers gathered in homes where they were taught. Acts 5.42; 10.1-48; 16.25-34, 40; 20.17-20; 28.30-31.
4. The NT Christians gathered in homes for discipleship, study and fellowship. Romans 16.5; 1 Corinthians 16.19; Colossians 4.15
5. There were churches functioning in homes. Philemon 2,3
6. The results were undeniable. Acts 2.47 "... the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" NIV

ii. After the death of the APOSTLES

1. There were no Christian temples until the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century. From the death of Christ and until the conversion of Constantine there is no Christian architecture. Worship services were held in family homes or in catacombs.
2. MARTIN LUTHER wrote in the introduction to the German Mass: "Those who seriously want to be Christians and want to confess the Gospel in word and deed, these ought to inscribe their names in a book and assemble in a house by themselves for purposes of prayer, the reading of Scripture, the administration of baptism, the reception of the sacrament and to engage in other Christian activities..." He continues, "...but I neither can nor may as yet set up such a congregation; for I do not as yet have the people for it." (Parish Renewal at the Grassroots, Prior, 18. quoted in Don James, Intensive I, Section 3, page 5)
3. JOHN WESLEY and Methodism. Wesley was the pioneer in using small groups for evangelism. Towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Wesley had developed more than 10,000 small groups called "classes". The emphasis was more on discipleship than in decisions. For Wesley evangelism took place primarily in the classes and in the hearts of people in the following hours after the class meeting. After his sermons he invited people to join a class. (Joel Comiskey, Home Cell Group Explosion, 22-24).

**Exercise: (5 Minutes)**

- Ask students to raise their hands.
- Ask: How many of you were contacted first (got to know God and be baptized in the SDA church) because of:
  - Public evangelism?
  - Community services?
  - Radio and TV programs?
  - Adventist Publications?
  - Family?
  - Friends and neighbors?
- GG are more natural way of doing evangelism. It works with the already

existing relationships people have.

**f. A natural way of doing EVANGELISM**

- i. Study after study have shown that around 90% of the people that join the church were contacted and influenced primarily by friends, relatives or acquaintances.
- ii. This is called the OIKOS factor: doing evangelism with those in your circle of influence.
- i. Joseph Kidder did a study for Andrews University with people who have joined the SDA church and how they were contacted:
 

1. Public Evangelism	1%
2. Special Needs	1-2%
3. Visitation	1-2%
4. Walk In	2-3%
5. Church Program	3-4
6. Sabbath School	4-5%
7. Pastor	5-6%
8. Friend/relative	<u>75-90%</u>
- iii. MARK 5:19 Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."

**g. The doctrine of the PRIESTHOOD of all BELIEVERS**

- i. The NT doctrine of the priesthood of all believers is better carried in GG.
- ii. Everyone in the small group is called to put to work whatever gift that person has received from God, and serve all those in need around them.
- iii. Key passages for the priesthood of all believers: Ephesians 4.11-12; 1 Peter 4.10; 2 Corinthians 3.6; 2 Timothy 1.9; Luke 4.18-19.

**h. It's part of our HISTORY as SDA**

- i. Historically the Seventh Day Adventist Church has had "social meetings"
- ii. These "social meetings" were mainly a time for testimonies, prayer, confession of sins, tears, and lives transformed.
- iii. "It's clear that these early social meetings were relational in nature. Little, if any, study of the Bible occurred there." (Russell Burrill, Recovering an Adventist Approach to the Life and Mission of the Local Church, 194).
- iv. So strongly did the early Adventists feel about the social meeting that it was considered a *duty* for the believer to attend the social meeting regularly... Anyone who deliberately absented themselves from social meetings was considered in need of spiritual help. (Ibid, 197).
- v. "The social meeting with its testimonies, prayers, songs, and words of mutual encouragement, was able to sustain the faith far better than sermons by the denomination's best preachers... (Ibid, 199).

**i. ESCHATOLOGICAL significance:**



- i. As SDA we believe (from our prophetic interpretation of prophecies) that the final events of this world will involve a restriction of the freedom to worship the true and only God.
- ii. Sadly it seems that today many church members depend too much on their pastors, churches and leaders for their spiritual strength.
- iii. GG is definitely a better way to prepare members to walk and feed themselves in preparation for the coming crisis.
- iv. In GG each member learns not to depend on the organization, temple or pastor for their spiritual growth and survival. Instead these church members now become disciple makers, and move from being receivers to givers and multipliers.

**j. Church GROWTH RESEARCH confirms it**

- i. The Natural Church Development study found that the crucial element for the growth of healthy churches was small groups.
- ii. "If we were to identify any one principle as the 'most important,' then without a doubt it would be the multiplication of small groups." (Christian A. Schwarz, Natural Church Development, 32)
- iii. Growing churches would say "it is more important for us that someone be involved in a small group than attend church." Ibid.

**k. The example of CONTEMPORARY churches**

- i. There are many churches around the world where small groups are implemented.
- ii. Full Gospel Church, Pastor David Cho, Korea. In 1998 they had they had 25,000 small groups, and the seven services on Sunday were attended by 253,000 people! And 25,000 of them would also attend the 6am service! (Joel Comiskey, Home Cell Group Explosion, 24) Today they are close to a million members!
- iii. Mision Carismática Internacional, Pastor Cesar Castellanos, Colombia. At the end of 1999 they had 20,000 small groups and 45,000 in attendance (Joel Comiskey, Groups of 12, 25).

**l. Better ASSIMILATION and RETENTION of new believers**

- i. In many places of the world around 50 % of those newly baptized leave the church.
- ii. In GG new baptized members are easily assimilated into their groups, where they can be nourished, discipled and developed as leaders for God.
- iii. When a member of a group is baptized that person already has a network of Christian friends for support.
- iv. If the newly baptized stops attending church the first ones to notice will be his own small group. They know where the person lives, where they can find him, they have his phone number, etc.

**m. Development of LEADERS**

- i. GG gives everyone the opportunity to grow, experience and take responsibility for Christ. Leaders are naturally developed.
- ii. My experience: With both the Ann Arbor church, in Michigan and the youth at Westchester in Miami, there is no room for doubts. The Growth Groups leaders grew and soon they became the main leaders and the natural influencers of the whole church.
- iii. Parents and church leaders have recognized how their sons and daughters have growth thanks to the training, practice and the responsibility of leading a GG.

**n. An inspired COUNSEL. ELLEN G. WHITE on Small Groups.**

- i. **Success guaranteed:** "The formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort has been presented to me by One who CANNOT ERR. If there is a large number in the church, let the members be formed into small companies, to work not only for the church members, but for unbelievers. If in one place there are only two or three who know the truth, let them form themselves into a band of workers. Let them keep their bond of union unbroken, pressing together in love and unity, encouraging one another to advance, each gaining courage and strength from the assistance of the others. Let them reveal Christlike forbearance and patience, speaking no hasty words, using the talent of speech to build one another up in the most holy faith. Let them labor in Christlike love for those outside the fold, forgetting self in their endeavor to help others. As they work and pray in Christ's name, their numbers WILL INCREASE; for the Saviour says: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven." Matthew 18:19." (Testimonies, vol. 7, 21-22)
- ii. Why do not believers feel a deeper, more earnest concern for those who are out of Christ? Why do not two or three meet together and plead with God for the salvation of some special one, and then for still another? In our churches let COMPANIES be formed for service. In the Lord's work there are to be no idlers. Let different ones unite in labor as fishers of men. Let them seek to gather souls from the corruption of the world into the saving purity of Christ's love. Australian Union Conference Record, August 15, 1902 par. 19
- iii. **Youth:** "And they that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." There are many Christian youth that can do a good work if they will learn lessons in the school of Christ from the great Teacher. Even though pastors, evangelists, and teachers should neglect the seeking of the lost, let not the children and youth neglect to be doers of the word. The lesson of Christ in this scripture is to be received and believed and acted upon in living faith. Let YOUNG men, and women, and children go to work in the name of Jesus. Let them unite together upon some plan and order of action. Cannot you form a BAND OF WORKERS, and have set times to pray together and ask the Lord to give you his grace, and put forth united action? You should consult with

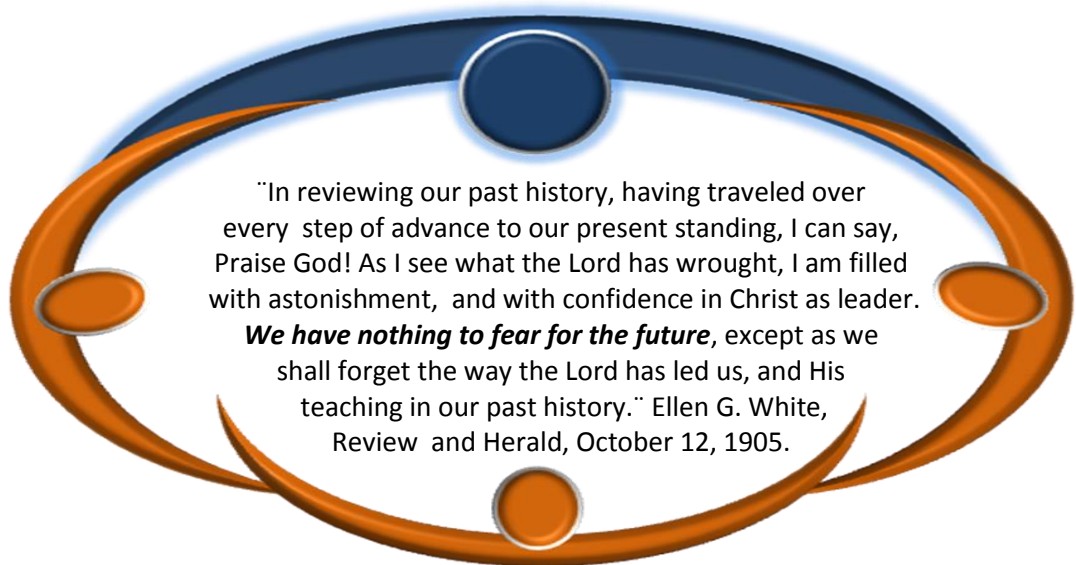
- men who love and fear God, and who have experience in the work, that under the movings of the Spirit of God, you may form PLANS and develop METHODS by which you may work in earnest and for certain results. The Lord will help those who will use their God-intrusted capabilities to his name's glory. Will our young men and young women who believe the truth, become LIVING MISSIONARIES? YI, August 9, 1894
- iv. "Let little companies meet together to study the Scriptures. You will lose nothing by this, but will gain much. Angels of God will be in your gathering, and as you feed upon the Bread of Life, you will receive spiritual sinew and muscle. You will be feeding, as it were, upon the leaves of the tree of life. By this means only can you maintain your INTEGRITY". This Day with God, 11.
  - v. "To all who are working with Christ I would say, Wherever you can gain access to the people by the fireside, improve your opportunity. Take your Bible, and open before them its great truths. Your success will not depend so much upon your knowledge and accomplishments, as upon your ability to find your way to the HEART. By being social and coming close to the people, you may turn the current of their thoughts more readily than by the most able discourse. The presentation of Christ in the family, by the fireside, and in small gatherings in private houses, is often more SUCCESSFUL in winning souls to Jesus than are sermons delivered in the open air, to the moving throng, or even in halls or churches". Gospel Workers, 193
  - vi. "The plan of holding Bible-readings was a heaven-born idea. There are many, both men and women, who can engage in this branch of missionary labor. Workers may thus be developed who will become MIGHTY men of God. By this means the word of God has been given to thousands; and the workers are brought into personal contact with people of all nations and tongues. The Bible is brought into families, and its sacred truths come home to the conscience. Men are entreated to read, examine, and judge for themselves, and they must abide the responsibility of receiving or rejecting the divine enlightenment. God will not permit this precious work for Him to go unrewarded. He will crown with SUCCESS every humble effort made in His name". Gospel Workers, 192

**Exercise:** (5 minutes)

- Give time to ponder and talk about what you have studied together
- People need the opportunity to briefly express what they think and feel about having GG. You can ask for 3 or 5 opinions.

4. Because of all these reasons we believe GG are greatly needed and can be a great blessing. At the same time, if you want to see and experience real change in your own life and help your church be revitalized in reaching others for Christ, then join the GG movement.

5. We hope this will be the beginning of the best part of your life!
6. And remember...

**Question and Answers: (7 Minutes)**

- Ask people if they have any questions and provide simple and to the point answers
- Remind students that this is only the beginning and many of their questions will be further answered in the coming sessions

**Explain and review the Practicum: (5 Minutes)**

- Explain what the practicum is and how it will help them have a practical experience that goes beyond theory
- Emphasize what they need to do for next week's meeting.

**Hand out any extra materials related to the Practicum: (5 Minutes)**

- Steps to Christ, to be marked and read
- Bible study series: to be completed by all students

**Remind of next week's meeting (2 minutes)**

- Remind people at what time the next training will begin and ask them to be on time!
- Remind of the place of the next training.
- Remind also the materials they need to bring to class
  - GG training manual
  - Pencil, Bible, etc.

**Vision Sharing (3 minutes)**

- Ask students why are we doing this?
- Passionately share that the vision of our GG is to create a movement of groups that will help each person reach those in their circle of influence, help people

grow into mature disciples of Jesus and be ready for his second coming.

### Prayer

- End the training by asking those present to pray in groups of two.

# GG Leadership Development Program

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



## **Session # 2 - A Holistic Biblical Leader (to BE)**

### **Objective of session # 2:**

1. Present what it means to be a Biblical leader.
2. Challenge potential leaders to become true Biblical leaders
3. Help each of them to create their own simple spiritual growth plan

### **Materials needed for session:**

1. Bible, GG student manual, white board and markers, pencils and papers.
2. Computer, projector and PPT

**Suggested time for this session:** 90 minutes

### **Optional additional reading materials for the instructor:**

1. Blackaby, H. T., & Blackaby, R. (2011). *Spiritual leadership: Moving people on to God's agenda*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.
2. Blackaby, H. T., & King, C. V. (2008). *Experiencing God: Knowing and doing the will of God* (Rev. & expanded. ed.). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.
3. Foster, R. J. (1998). *Celebration of discipline: The path to spiritual growth* (20th anniversary ed.). San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.
4. McNeal, R. (2011). *A work of heart: Understanding how God shapes spiritual leaders* (Updated ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
5. Swenson, R. A. (2004). *Margin: Restoring emotional, physical, financial, and time reserves to overloaded lives*. (Rev. ed.). Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.

### **Today's program: Session # 2**

1. Welcome and prayer
2. Thanksgiving:
  - o Thanks students and instructors for being present and on time on our second training session.
3. Today's session program: Briefly explain today's program
  - o Introduction exercises (Welcome, song [optional], prayer, etc)
  - o Study of session (fill in the blanks, exercises, discussion in groups, etc)
  - o Question and answers
  - o Practicum's follow up: Homework!
  - o Prayer
4. Introductory exercise
5. Study of Session # 2
6. Time for questions and answers
7. Practicum's follow up: Homework!
8. Vision sharing
9. Prayer

## **Session # 2 - A Holistic Biblical Leader (to BE)**

### ***Introductory exercise: (5 minutes)***

1. Before the session begins, distribute pencils and small pieces of paper in each of the student's tables.
2. Say: Who do you admire? Why? I will show you some names on the screen and you need to choose one of them who's advice you would strictly follow if you would have only 3 months to live. (You can add or delete names as you adapt it to your reality).
3. On the screen: Michael Jordan, George Bush, Madonna, Mother Theresa, Bill Gates, Fidel Castro, Homer Simpson, Steve Irwin (crocodile hunter), Barack Obama
4. You need to write it in your piece of paper and then handed to the person to your right.
5. Give 30 seconds to write and then say, pass it now to your right.
6. Now each one will read the name and say why they think the other person wrote this name.
7. Go around. Laugh if appropriate!
8. Now ask:
  - Do you think God considers any of these people to be a good leader?
  - What qualities do you think God desires leaders to have?

***Transition (you may say):*** *Ok, now that we have share who we would chose to guide us if we only had 3 months to live, let's talk about the characteristics of a true Biblical leader. Lets dive in into Session # 2!*

### **1. Key Passage: TITUS 2.6-8**

### **2. Images of a Biblical Leader:**

#### **a. Read Matthew 9.9**

#### **FOLLOWER**

- i. Jesus never called people to be leaders; instead He called them to be followers.
- ii. Following is a very risky thing! People ask: Does the leader knows where he is going? Are his purposes really pure and good? Is he worthy of trust? After all I'm placing my life in his hands.
- iii. Can Jesus be followed? He never abandoned anyone, never misled, and never did anything for selfish reasons. In reality the more we get to know Him the more we realize He is the only one worthy to be followed.
- iv. All the great men of the Bible learned to follow. Think of Abraham, who followed God at age 75, leaving behind his country and culture with relatives. He learned that God fulfills His promises, that He provides and that following Him is always better than us trying to take the lead.
- v. Every day we need to remember that God is the leader, we have to follow. He is the boss!

- vi. God knows we need to learn to be obedient followers before He can entrust us the responsibility of leading others.
- vii. The emphasis of the follower image is worship (who do you follow-worship).

b. Read Matthew 28.19

**DISCIPLE**

- i. A disciple is a person whose major goal in life is to become like his teacher.
- ii. In NT times a disciple would leave this family and live with his teacher following him wherever he went in order to learn from him everything possible. This involved way more than information. It was the goal of a disciple to be able to think, talk, relate, walk, and live as his teacher.
- iii. We are called to pursue Christ likeness (2 Corinthians 3.18) until we reach “the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4.11-13).
- iv. To be a disciple is a lifetime commitment to a process of becoming like Christ.
- v. The emphasis of the disciple image is discipleship (maturing and becoming like Christ). We will see more on discipleship in session # 9.

c. Read Matthew 4.18-20

**FISHER OF MAN**

- i. Jesus didn’t call himself the Good Fisherman, but instead the Good Shepherd! So why didn’t he called his future leaders of the church to be shepherds?
- ii. A fisherman is by nature more aggressive than a shepherd. A shepherd receives a herd and takes care of it, while the fisherman needs to go out, needs to be proactive daily to make a living!
- iii. Every member has been called to be a fisherman, but not every member is called to be shepherd.
- iv. "Too many Christians are no longer fishers of men but keepers of the aquarium" Paul Harvey.
- v. Practically, to be a fisherman means to bring somebody to Jesus this year!
- vi. The emphasis of the fisherman image is evangelism.

d. Read Matthew 20.26-28

**SERVANT**

- i. The call to follow Christ is a call to serve. Jesus has called his followers to be helpers of others, to be looking for ways in which to alleviate people’s loads.
- ii. A faithful servant learns from the example of His master who became a servant in the flesh (Philippians 2.1-8) and who also said that he came to serve instead of being served (Matthew 20.28).
- iii. Jesus even said that if we only do what we have been told to do as servants then we are simply unworthy servants (Matthew 17.10)
- iv. Every time Jesus saw the multitudes he sought for ways in which to serve them. “You have never looked into the eyes of another person who isn’t important to God-and everyone who matters to God should matter to me.”



- v. As we prepare to lead a group we should remember to always have a servant attitude.
- vi. The emphasis of the servant image is ministry.

e. Read John 15.15

**FRIEND**

- i. Jesus chooses to describe his disciples as someone who has a choice.
- ii. Slaves didn't have a choice, but friends were moved by reciprocal love.
- iii. Jesus wanted his disciples to think of their relationship with him as friends.
- iv. A real leader of a GG knows Jesus personally, walks with Him daily, and talks to Him constantly.
- v. In the same way members of each GG should know and feel they can find and trust in their GG leader as a true friend.
- vi. A GG leader is a friend of God and of people!
- vii. The emphasis of the friend image is communion, fellowship, love.

3. **Qualities of a Spiritual GG Leader**

a. Real spiritual **EXPERIENCE**

- i. Read 1 John 1.1-4
- ii. Lost people need to see real Christians, persons who have a personal daily walk and experience with the Lord Jesus.
- iii. As a group leader we won't be able to give what we don't have. We need to have first a personal encounter with Jesus that would transform us completely.
- iv. To be real transcends the realm of knowledge or information; this is more about a personal relationship with the crucified Savior.
- v. The reality is that people can easily tell who is real and who is not, if we know Him personally or only know about Him through business and second hand.

b. An honoring **LIFESTYLE**

- i. Read 1 Corinthians 10.31; Matthew 5.16
- ii. The Bible version The Message presents Romans 12.1-2 in the following way: "So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out."
- iii. A real experience with God can't be hidden, it will be seen in the way we live, and throughout all we do (Deuteronomy 6.6-7).
- iv. This is honoring God's name in its fullest (Exodus 20.7)
- v. A GG leader uses words only when necessary, because his example speaks louder.

c. ACCOUNTABLE

- i. Read Romans 14.12
- ii. Every believer is accountable to God for everything we are and do. The Bible teaches that we will have to give account of everything we have and haven't done (Ecclesiastes 12.14)
- iii. We are also accountable for the use we have given of God's entrusted resources, which includes time, money, influence, physical body, and abilities.
- iv. The Lord uses friends, family, leaders and fellow believers to keep one another accountable.
- v. Growth Groups help to keep people accountable not out of fear but out of love for God and our neighbor.

d. FLEXIBLE

- i. Read 1 Corinthians 9.20-23.
- ii. Paul being the greatest missionary of the NT was very experienced with being flexible and adapting for the only purpose of winning people to Christ.
- iii. Jesus earthly ministry shows how he wisely adapted his methods according to the people He was ministering to. He usually taught through parables to the masses, discussed the meaning of certain passages with the leaders of the church, and spoke clearly when alone with disciples.
- iv. To be flexible means to be able to change and adapt to circumstances.
- v. As a leader of a GG we should be willing to adapt to our groups and the people the Lord has brought to them. A wise leader would not expect others to adapt to Him, but will be willing to adapt himself first, after all in doing it we would be only imitating the example of the one who became flesh so we could better understand and know God.

e. TEACHABLE

- i. Read Proverbs 4.8-9; Proverbs 19.20
- ii. A teachable heart is indispensable for a GG leader.
- iii. God can work amazing things with those who are always eager and ready to learn from others. This reveals a humble heart.

f. DREAMER

- i. 1 Chronicles 4.9,10
- ii. Every GG leader needs to be dreaming of God size dreams.
- iii. These dreams need to come from God and not from a proud heart that is seeking recognition or human honor.
- iv. This is a dream of a better way of ministering to people and fulfilling God's purpose for everyone we come in contact with.

g. MATURE

- i. Read Hebrews 5.11-14
- ii. Every GG leader must make a priority to grow and mature into Christ likeness.
- iii. Make your experience with God real by prayerfully planning your spiritual growth.

**Exercise: (5 Minutes)**

- Ask students to turn their handbooks to the Spiritual Growth Assessment on page \_\_\_\_:
- Explain what it means, how to do it, and ask them to bring it ready for the next session.

h. DISCIPLINED for godliness

- i. Read 1 Timothy 4.7; 1 Corinthians 9.24-27
- ii. It's God's desire that we discipline and train for Godliness.
- iii. Review the Spiritual Disciplines in Appendix 2C.

i. ADDICTED

- i. Read Psalms 119.9-11
- ii. A real spiritual GG leader is totally dependent of God's Word. She knows she needs a daily shot of God's undiluted will for her life.
- iii. Every Christian needs to read God's word over and over again, going deeper and deeper every time.
- iv. It shouldn't be a surprise if at some points and for a limited time we neglect physical food in order to digest more of the spiritual one (Matthew 4.4).

j. PRAYERFUL

- i. Read Mark 1.35
- ii. Anyone who wants to be a spiritual leader must be willing to pay the price and follow the example set by the greatest leaders of all time, Jesus.
- iii. For Jesus prayer was the source of strength, power, and purpose.
- iv. Every GG leader must make prayer a priority in his/her daily schedule.

k. FOOL, WEAK, UNWISE, HUMAN!

- i. Read 1 Corinthians 1.26-29; Isaiah 6.5-7
- ii. After all that has been said, one may come to think that the leader of a GG must be a super spiritual giant. In reality, the leader needs to see himself as God sees him: unworthy, unwise, a fool, unclean and guilty.
- iii. When a leader sees himself in that way, then and only then, God can cleanse him, renew his life with His power, and really use him.

#### 4. Profile of GG Leader

- a. Leadership is INFLUENCE. This is always EARNED and doesn't come with position.
- b. Every human being has some kind of influence, and God expects the GG leader to influence the people in his group for God's kingdom.
- c. Leadership Styles in Leading a GG
  - i. AUTOCRATIC domineering, dictatorial
  - ii. AUTHORITATIVE definite yet responsive
  - iii. DEMOCRATIC group-centered
  - iv. LAISSEZ-FAIRE permissive, passive
  - v. "To be most helpful, you will want to be fairly authoritative (not authoritarian) in the group's early life and then shift to a DEMOCRATIC style as the group matures. Your goal should be to become the facilitator-enabler of the life and progress of your group." Roberta Hestenes.
- d. Motives for leadership
  - i. WRONG motives
    1. To follow the crowd
    2. To gain approval or admiration
    3. To fulfill an emotional need, acceptance or approval
    4. To obtain power and authority
  - ii. RIGHT motives
    1. To glorify God. 1 Corinthians 10.31; John 17.4
    2. To please God. 2 Corinthians 5.9; 1 Thessalonians 2.4
    3. To love and serve the Lord and brethren. Matthew 22.37-39; Matthew 25.31
    4. To follow Christ's example. 2 Corinthians 5.14; 1 John 3.16
    5. To be like Christ. 1 Peter 1.15; 1 John 2.6
    6. To advance the kingdom. Matthew 28.19-20; Jeremiah 1.10.
- e. Understanding how God shapes spiritual leaders (A Work of Heart, McNeal)
  - i. CULTURE includes all environmental influences, like the historical period, political situation, societal mores and traditions. "Culture is not neutral; it contains both positive and negative forces." (xii)
  - ii. CALL is the "personal conviction of having received some life assignment or mission that must be completed." (xiii)
  - iii. COMMUNITY leaders are greatly influenced by their families, friends, and their communities of faith.

- iv. COMMUNION is the “conscious cultivation of a relationship with God. Spiritual leaders deal in spiritual currency. The value of this currency depends directly on the strength of the leaders’ deposits into the relationship bank with the Almighty.” (Ibid)
- v. CONFLICT is central to the heart shaping of the spiritual leader. These leaders are in a combative position against destructive powers of the enemy. Conflicts could be personal, interrelational, demonic, or organizational.
- vi. COMMONPLACE is the everyday run, when no one is looking, the ordinary routine, the response to opportunities and challenges. These choices reflect the leader’s predisposition toward God’s work in the leader’s life.

**Exercise: (5 Minutes)** optional depending on time

- Ask students to prayerfully write their own journey as a leader in each of these six areas.
- How do they shape you? How is God using them?

- f. The need and advantage of Co-Leaders in GG
  - i. Read ECCLESIASTES 4.9-12
  - ii. Jesus chose to send his disciples in groups of two as he prepared the cities where He would visit. He was, at the same time, developing his disciples as fishers of man. In doing ministry work Jesus follows the same pattern: He sent the twelve disciples in pairs of two (Mark 6.7) and later the seventy in the same way (Luke 10.1)
  - iii. Christ also said “Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.” Matthew 18.19 NIV
  - iv. In many occasions Jesus sent two disciples to accomplish a specific task: getting the donkey (Matthew 21.1,2); in preparing the place for Passover (Mark 14.13); John the Baptist did the same (Matthew 11.2)
  - v. Sent Forth two by two: “Calling the twelve about Him, Jesus bade them go out two and two through the towns and villages. None were sent forth alone, but brother was associated with brother, friend with friend. Thus they could help and encourage each other, counseling and praying together, each one’s strength supplementing the other’s weakness. In the same manner He afterward sent forth the seventy. It was the Saviour’s purpose that the messengers of the gospel should be associated in this way. In our own time evangelistic work would be FAR more SUCCESSFUL if this example were more closely followed.” Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 350.

- g. Job description of a GG leader
- i. LEADS the whole group life and meetings sharing often different parts with others, completes and turns in the weekly group report.
  - ii. IDENTIFIES abilities and gifts in others and finds ways to use them in group ministry.
  - iii. CARES for the group members paying special attention to their needs, visiting them, fostering unity and fellowship, and managing any conflicts that may arise.
  - iv. CHAMPIONS outreach activities inviting people, organizing social activities, and Matthew parties.
  - v. PRAYS daily for himself, the group members, visitors and church.
  - vi. Fosters the spiritual GROWTH of believers and nonbelievers.
  - vii. Constantly communicates the VISION of group multiplication
  - viii. DEVELOPS new leaders within the group who would be capable of leading when the group multiplies and invites them to participate in the developing program for leaders that the church offers.
  - ix. Selects a spiritual FATHER/MOTHER to accompany each new believer, watching that they would receive Bible studies and be led to baptism.
  - x. MEETS regularly with other GG leaders and pastor for ongoing training and coaching.

**Exercise: (5 Minutes)** optional depending on time

- Ask students: Now, what do you think about becoming a leader of a Growth Group?
- Spend a couple minutes talking with your partner about the barriers that you may face.
- Talk also about how to overcome those barriers? Think about God, His purpose, and His job experience/credentials!
- Read together Jeremiah 29.11 and pray about it.

5. Always remember Jeremiah 29.11
- a. "I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for". MSS
  - b. "For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope". NLT

**Explain: (5 Minutes)**

- Ask the students to go now to the Appendix material of this session.
- Explain the value of each material
- Encourage them to read, meditate, and decide to make changes in order to grow into Christlikeness.

6. Appendix for you to review, meditate upon and grow.
  - a. Appendix 2A - Spiritual Growth Assessment Process – by LifeWay
  - b. Appendix 2B - Soul Nourishment First - A Booklet by George Mueller - May 9, 1841
  - c. Appendix 2C - Spiritual Disciplines – Introduction
  - d. Appendix 2D - Christ's Devotional Life - With Nature and With God, Ellen White, Ministry of Healing, 51-58
  - e. Appendix 2E - Yearly Bible Reading Plan

Appendix 2A – Spiritual Growth Assessment Process – by LifeWay

## Spiritual Growth Assessment Process

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### Spiritual Growth Assessment Process

**Your spiritual journey as a follower of Christ began the moment you admitted personal sin and placed your trust in Christ as Savior and Lord. From that point, until death or the return of Christ, your life's call is to grow in Christlikeness.**

Jesus summarizes the disciple's call in Mark 8:34, "If anyone wants to be My follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me" (Holman CSB).

Accomplishing such a challenging assignment requires growing in your understanding of what it means to be a Christian, expanding your personal knowledge of biblical truth, and applying daily what you learn. Through the presence of His indwelling Spirit, God enables you to know, obey, and serve Him.

God expects His children to grow spiritually and His Word encourages personal examination as an element of growth.

- "Let us search out and examine our ways..." Lamentations 3:40
- "Now, the Lord of Hosts says this: Think carefully about your ways." Haggai 1:5
- "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns. See if there is any offensive way in me; lead me in the everlasting way." Psalm 139:23-24
- "But each person should examine his own work, and then he will have a reason for boasting in himself alone, and not in respect to someone else." Galatians 6:4
- "Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people, but as wise." Ephesians 5:15

This assessment process can help you complete an examination and careful search of your spiritual growth. Follow these simple steps to complete the process.

1. Complete the **Spiritual Growth Assessment**.  
The assessment helps you think carefully about your spiritual development related to six specific spiritual disciplines; abiding in Christ, living in the Word, praying in faith, fellowshiping with believers, witnessing to the world, ministering to others. Before completing your responses, ask the Lord to guide your evaluation. Since most of these statements require a subjective response, His guidance is the key to an accurate appraisal. Also, resist the urge to compare scores with others. Self-condemnation or pride could result from such comparisons. Trust God to help you grow spiritually by revealing heart issues and empowering you to take action.
2. Draw and evaluate your **Discipleship Wheel**.
3. Distribute copies of the **Spiritual Growth Observations Response Sheet** to at least three people. Follow the instructions before completing a personal growth plan.
4. Begin working on a **personal growth plan**.  
The **Annual Spiritual Growth Plan** worksheet helps you formulate an intentional plan for growth. Use the **Recommended Actions for Spiritual Growth Guide** to discover suggestions for actions to include in your plan. As you discuss your plan with an accountability partner, you may discover additional actions that more effectively meet your needs.

As you complete this assessment process the temptation might be to think your efforts are central to growing spiritually. **Remember, becoming like Christ centers on His work in us and not our work for Him. God desires heart change over religious actions.** Without question, God does the revealing, the renewing, the empowering, and the recreating. Your part as His disciple is to do the yielding, the submitting, and the obeying.

### Spiritual Growth Assessment

As you complete the assessment, avoid rushing. Listen for God's voice to encourage and challenge you. Consider this experience as one-on-one time with Him. Be intentional in your growth towards Christlikeness. Use the scale below to respond to each statement.

Never - 1    Seldom - 2    Occasionally - 3    Frequent - 4    Always - 5

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	RESPONSE
<b>ABIDE IN CHRIST</b>	
1. I practice a regular quiet time and look forward to that time with Christ.	
2. When making choices, I seek Christ's guidance first.	
3. My relationship with Christ is motivated more by love than duty or fear.	
4. I experience life change as a result of my worship experiences.	
5. When God makes me aware of His specific will in an area of my life, I follow His leading.	
6. I believe Christ provides the only way for a relationship with God.	
7. My actions demonstrate a desire to build God's kingdom rather than my own.	
8. Peace, contentment, and joy characterize my life rather than worry and anxiety.	
9. I trust Christ to help me through any problem or crisis I face.	
10. I remain confident of God's love and provision during difficult times.	
<b>Abide in Christ Total</b>	
<b>LIVE IN THE WORD</b>	
1. I regularly read and study my Bible.	
2. I believe the Bible is God's Word and provides His instructions for life.	
3. I evaluate cultural ideas and lifestyles by biblical standards.	
4. I can answer questions about life and faith from a biblical perspective.	
5. I replace impure or inappropriate thoughts with God's truth.	
6. I demonstrate honesty in my actions and conversation.	
7. When the Bible exposes an area of my life needing change, I respond to make things right.	
8. Generally, my public and private self are the same.	
9. I use the Bible as the guide for the way I think and act.	
10. I study the Bible for the purpose of discovering truth for daily living.	
<b>Live By God's Word Total</b>	
<b>PRAY IN FAITH</b>	
1. My prayers focus on discovering God's will more than expressing my needs.	
2. I trust God to answer when I pray and wait patiently on His timing.	
3. My prayers include thanksgiving, praise, confession, and requests.	
4. I expect to grow in my prayer life and intentionally seek help to improve.	
5. I spend as much time listening to God as talking to Him.	
6. I pray because I am aware of my complete dependence on God for everything in my life.	
7. Regular participation in group prayer characterizes my prayer life.	
8. I maintain an attitude of prayer throughout each day.	
9. I believe my prayers impact my life and the lives of others.	
10. I engage in a daily prayer time.	
<b>Pray In Faith Total</b>	



<b>FELLOWSHIP WITH BELIEVERS</b>	
1. I forgive others when their actions harm me.	
2. I admit my errors in relationships and humbly seek forgiveness from the one I've hurt.	
3. I allow other Christians to hold me accountable for spiritual growth.	
4. I seek to live in harmony with other members of my family.	
5. I place the interest of others above my self-interest.	
6. I am gentle and kind in my interactions with others.	
7. I encourage and listen to feedback from others to help me discover areas for relationship growth.	
8. I show patience in my relationships with family and friends.	
9. I encourage others by pointing out their strengths rather than criticizing their weaknesses.	
10. My time commitments demonstrate that I value relationships over work/career/hobbies.	
<b>Build Godly Relationships Total</b>	
<b>WITNESS TO THE WORLD</b>	
1. I share my faith in Christ with non-believers.	
2. I regularly pray for non-believers I know.	
3. I make my faith known to my neighbors and/or fellow employees.	
4. I intentionally maintain relationships with non-believers in order to share my testimony.	
5. When confronted about my faith, I remain consistent and firm in my testimony.	
6. I help others understand how to effectively share a personal testimony.	
7. I make sure the people I witness to get the follow-up and support needed to grow in Christ.	
8. I encourage my church and friends to support mission efforts.	
9. I am prepared to share my testimony at any time.	
10. My actions demonstrate a belief in and commitment to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).	
<b>Witness To The World Total</b>	
<b>MINISTER TO OTHERS</b>	
1. I understand my spiritual gifts and use those gifts to serve others.	
2. I serve others expecting nothing in return.	
3. I sacrificially contribute my finances to help others in my church and community.	
4. I go out of my way to show love to people I meet.	
5. Meeting the needs of others provides a sense of purpose in my life.	
6. I share biblical truth with those I serve as God gives opportunity.	
7. I act as if other's needs are as important as my own.	
8. I expect God to use me every day in His kingdom work.	
9. I regularly contribute time to a ministry at my church.	
10. I help others identify ministry gifts and become involved in ministry.	
<b>Minister To Others Total</b>	

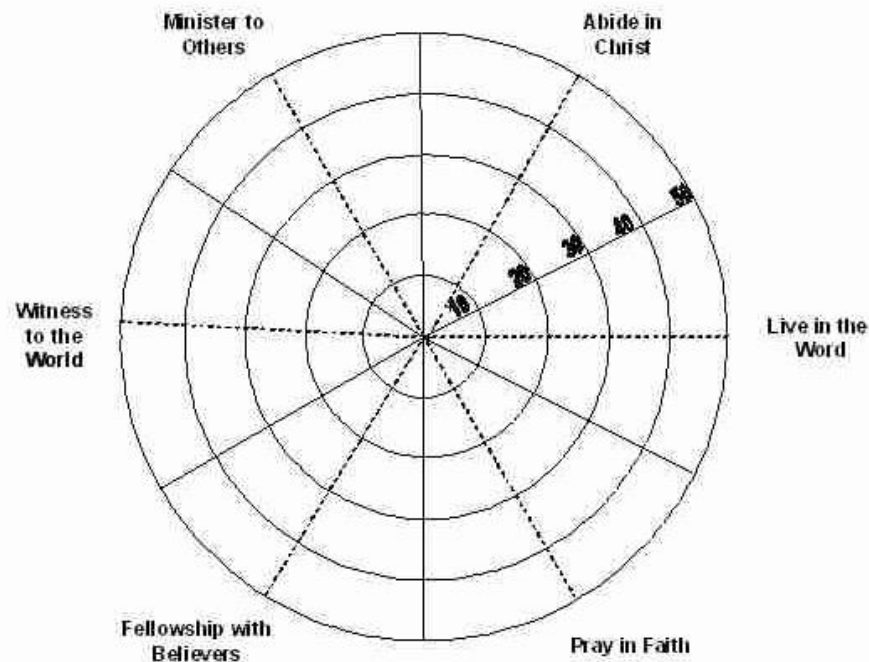
### Your Discipleship Wheel

For a visual representation of your spiritual assessment complete the following steps:

**Step One:** On the dotted line in each discipline section of the circle plot a point corresponding to your total score for that discipline. Place similar points on the solid lines to the immediate right and left of each dotted line.

**Step Two:** Connect the plotted points with curved lines similar to the lines of the circle.

**Step Three:** Using a pencil or marker shade the areas in each section between the lines you drew and the center of the circle. The shaded areas reveal your personal discipleship wheel at this point in your spiritual journey.



Practice these things; be committed to them,  
so that your progress may be evident to all.  
1 Timothy 4:15 HCSB

**Step Four:** Ask yourself these questions:

1. Which areas have the most shading? At this point in your spiritual journey, you see these as the strongest elements of your spiritual growth. List below one benefit these strengths bring to
  - a. You personally: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Your family: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Your church: \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Your community: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which areas have the least shading? At this point in your spiritual journey you see these as the elements needing the most improvement. List below one reward growth in these disciplines would bring to:
  - a. You personally: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Your family: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Your church: \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Your community: \_\_\_\_\_

**Step Five:** Make specific plans to grow spiritually this next year. Complete the **Annual Spiritual Growth Plan**.

## Spiritual Growth Observations Instructions

1. Enlist 3 people to complete a **Spiritual Growth Observation** on you. These should be Christians who regularly observe your life actions. If married, your spouse would be an excellent choice to give you feedback. Older children in your family might also be considered. Explain to those you enlist that you need their help to accurately assess your spiritual growth. Point out that you want to discover areas where growth is needed and without their input those discoveries might not be possible.
2. After receiving the completed observations, follow these simple steps:
  - a. Send each person who completed the observations a thank you note.
  - b. Pray over the responses before looking at the specific scores.
  - c. Average the scores of each discipline and write the average score below.
 

▪ Abide in Christ	_____
▪ Live by God's Word	_____
▪ Pray in Faith	_____
▪ Build godly Relationships	_____
▪ Witness to the World	_____
▪ Minister to Others	_____
  - d. Compare the scores with your personal assessment totals. Ask yourself these questions and discuss your answers with your accountability partner:
    - i. Where do the observer scores agree with my personal scores?
    - ii. Where do the observer scores disagree with my personal scores? If the observer scores disagree with my scores, do they agree with each other? If so, could this be a blind spot for me that needs attention?
    - iii. Review any "NO" (not observed) responses. Should the people closest to me be seeing more of these actions? If your answer is yes, consider addressing this on your **Annual Spiritual Growth Action Plan**.
3. Complete your **Annual Spiritual Growth Action Plan**.



## Spiritual Growth Observations Response Sheet

You have been asked by another disciple to participate in an intentional process to evaluate his/her spiritual growth. Your observations will be used to help develop a growth plan for the upcoming year. In order to provide helpful evaluations, ask the Lord for direction before completing this form. Even though these are subjective responses, God can use them to affirm and challenge this fellow traveler on the journey of discipleship. Authentic change occurs as the community of believers helps one another grow spiritually. Use the following scale to respond to each statement.

Never-1	Seldom-2	Occasionally-3	Frequent-4	Always-5	Not observed-NO
1. Peace, contentment, and joy characterize life rather than worry and anxiety.					
2. Demonstrates trust in Christ when facing life problems.					
3. Participates in church worship experiences.					
4. Expresses love for Christ.					
5. Engages in a personal quiet time.					
<b>Abide in Christ - Total (add lines 1-5)</b>					
6. Teaches others biblical truth.					
7. Public and private self are the same.					
8. Biblical truth guides personal actions.					
9. Demonstrates self-control in stressful situations.					
10. Talks about biblical standards for life actions.					
<b>Live in the Word - Total (add lines 6-10)</b>					
11. Engages in a daily prayer time.					
12. Talks about God's answers to personal prayers.					
13. Solicits prayer concerns from others.					
14. Encourages others to pray.					
15. Initiates times of prayer in group settings.					
<b>Pray in Faith - Total (add lines 11-15)</b>					
16. Admits errors in relationships and seeks forgiveness.					
17. Demonstrates humility in relating to others.					
18. Seeks unity in relationships rather than creating division.					
19. Encourages other instead of criticizing.					
20. Gentle and kind in interactions with others.					
<b>Fellowship with Believers - Total (add lines 16-20)</b>					
21. Participates in evangelistic mission efforts.					
22. Makes faith known to neighbors and/or fellow employees.					
23. Helps others understand how to effectively share a personal testimony.					
24. Shares a personal testimony with non-believers.					
25. Prays for non-believers by name.					
<b>Witness to the World - Total (add lines 21-25)</b>					
26. Treats others needs as important as his/her own.					
27. Contributes time to a ministry at church.					
28. Demonstrates an attitude of servanthood.					
29. Contributes finances to help others in the church and community.					
30. Serves others expecting nothing in return.					
<b>Minister to Others - Total (add lines 26-30)</b>					

**Annual Spiritual Growth Plan**  
**Date Started** \_\_\_\_\_

**I. Enlist an accountability partner who will agree to do the following:**

1. Meet with me initially to overview my assessment and pray with me about this plan.
2. Meet with me at least once each month to discuss my progress on this plan.
3. Affirm my successes and challenge me to stay focused on achieving each part of the plan.
4. Pray regularly for me.
5. My accountability partner will be \_\_\_\_\_

**II. Decide on actions for spiritual growth.**

- On the blanks following numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 write in the seasons on the year beginning with the coming season. For Example: You completed the assessment in November. Number 1 would be "Winter."
- Use your discipleship wheel to determine actions. For example, looking at areas of less shading, what is the next step for your growth in that area? (knowing more about what God expects, building skills in this discipline, just doing it, or joining a group that does this discipline).
- Next, consider the areas of more shading. What is the next step for your growth in those areas? (leading others in knowing this discipline, leading others in doing this discipline, or building consistency in doing this discipline)



1. \_\_\_\_\_ During these months I will
  - a. Improve my understanding of God's standard for the following discipline through individual and/or group study.  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of study \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Set an action goal. Use the Recommended Actions Guide for suggestions.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ During these months I will
  - a. Improve my understanding of God's standard for the following discipline through individual and/or group study.  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of study \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Set an action goal. Use the Recommended Actions Guide for suggestions.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ During these months I will
  - a. Improve my understanding of God's standard for the following discipline through individual and/or group study.  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of study \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Set an action goal. Use the Recommended Actions Guide for suggestions.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ During these months I will
  - a. Improve my understanding of God's standard for the following discipline through individual and/or group study.  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of study \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Set an action goal. Use the Recommended Actions Guide for suggestions.

### Recommended Actions for Spiritual Growth Guide

The following actions can help you complete your annual intentional plan for your spiritual growth. See these as suggestions to get you started rather than as a list of the only possibilities. Trust God to guide you in your choices. The key to growth will be His work in you as you intentionally seek His kingdom first. The administrative guide *Discipleship: God's Life Changing Work* provides recommendations for small group studies related to each discipline. Download this guide at [www.lifeway.com/discipleship](http://www.lifeway.com/discipleship).

#### Abide in Christ

1. Attend a corporate worship experience weekly.
2. Set aside a specific time and location for a regular quiet time.
3. Establish a practice of worship preparation through prayer and confession.
4. Learn about biblical fasting.
5. Practice fasting as the Lord directs.
6. Learn about your identity in Christ.
7. Regularly thank God and give Him praise in all situations.
8. Make a list of things that hinder your spiritual growth and seek God's help to remove those hindrances.

#### Live in the Word

1. Memorize one Scripture verses each week.
2. Memorize passages of Scripture.
3. Take notes from the pastor's sermon and other Bible study experiences each week. Evaluate how the study applies to your life.
4. Establish a regular time for personal Bible study. Take notes from the study and evaluate how the biblical truth applies to your life.
5. Use commentaries and other study resources to enrich Bible study.
6. Read one chapter from the Bible each day. Discover one action required and do it.
7. Read one chapter from the Bible each day. Meditate on the character of God described in the chapter.
8. Participate in an ongoing small group Bible study.
9. Accept a Bible teaching position in your church.
10. Lead a small group study related to living by God's Word.

#### Pray in Faith

1. Participate in the prayer ministry of your church.
2. Enlist a prayer partner and meet regularly for prayer.
3. Journal your prayers and record God's answers.
4. Organize a prayer ministry for your church or small group.
5. Lead a small group study related to praying in faith.
6. Pray each day.

#### Fellowship with Believers

1. Ask family members to identify ways you can improve your relationships with each one.
2. Ask friends to identify ways you can improve your relationships with each one.
3. Make a list of people who have hurt you and ask God for help to forgive them.

4. Participate in an ongoing small group to build relationships with other believers.
5. Complete an individual study related to building godly relationships in your marriage. Attend a retreat or workshop on parenting.
6. Attend a retreat or workshop on marriage.
7. Lead a small group study related to building godly relationships in marriage.
8. Lead a small group study related to building godly relationships as a parent.
9. Lead a small group study related to building godly relationships with others.

### **Witness to the World**

1. Write your testimony and practice sharing it with another believer.
2. Secure several gospel tracts and distribute them as the Lord leads.
3. Learn to share your testimony without using printed support.
4. Make a list of non-believers you know and begin praying regularly for their salvation.
5. Begin building relationships with the non-believers on your street.
6. Begin building relationships with non-believers at work.
7. Invite an unchurched friend to worship or Bible study.
8. Include a specific missions focus in your prayers.
9. Share your testimony as God provides the opportunity.
10. Participate in an evangelistic missions experience.
11. Lead a small group study related to witnessing to the world.
12. With your accountability partner list places you visit in a normal week. Brainstorm creative ways of witnessing to the people you regularly see at these places.

### **Minister to Others**

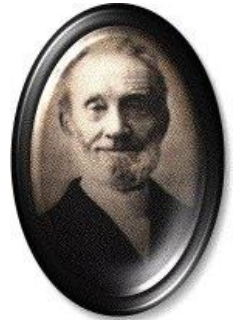
1. Complete a spiritual gifts inventory. Download a spiritual gifts inventory at [www.lifeway.com/downloads](http://www.lifeway.com/downloads).
2. Volunteer for a ministry in your church where you can use your spiritual gifts, interests, and natural abilities.
3. Send encouragement notes to your church staff.
4. Visit one homebound person each week.
5. Look for new baby bows on mailboxes in your neighborhood. Send a note of congratulations and drop off a gift or meal.
6. Volunteer to baby sit for a single parent in your church to give them a night out each month.
7. Volunteer to serve meals at a local shelter.
8. Volunteer to tutor students or help in a classroom at a local school.
9. Ask a member of your church staff to help you discover ways to minister to people on your street. For example, hold a small group meeting in your home quarterly to discuss topics such as marriage and parenting.
10. Lead a small group study related to ministering to others.

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**Appendix 2B - Soul Nourishment First** - A Booklet by George Mueller - May 9, 1841

It has pleased the Lord to teach me a truth, the benefit of which I have not lost, for more than fourteen years. The point is this: I saw more clearly than ever that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord. The first thing to be concerned about was not how much I might serve the Lord, or how I might glorify the Lord; but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man might be nourished. For I might seek to set the truth before the unconverted, I might seek to benefit believers, I might seek to relieve the distressed, I might in other ways seek to behave myself as it becomes a child of God in this world; and yet, not being happy in the Lord, and not being nourished and strengthened in my inner man day by day, all this might not be attended to in a right spirit.

*George Mueller*

Before this time my practice had been, at least for ten years previously, as an habitual thing, to give myself to prayer, after having dressed myself in the morning. Now, I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the Word of God, and to meditation on it, that thus my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warned, reprov'd, instructed; and that thus, by means of the Word of God, while meditating on it, my heart might be brought into experiential communion with the Lord.

I began therefore to meditate on the New Testament from the beginning, early in the morning. The first thing I did, after having asked in a few words the Lord's blessing upon his precious Word, was, to begin to meditate on the Word of God, searching as it were into every verse, to get blessing out of it; not for the sake of the public ministry of the Word, not for the sake of preaching on what I had meditated upon, but for the sake of obtaining food for my own soul.

The result I have found to be almost invariably this, that after a very few minutes my soul has been led to confession, or to thanksgiving, or to intercession, or to supplication; so that, though I did not, as it were, give myself to prayer, but to meditation, yet it turned almost immediately more or less into prayer. When thus I have been for a while making confession or intercession, or supplication, or have given thanks, I go to the next words or verse, turning all, as I go on, into prayer for myself or others, as the Word may lead to it, but still continually keeping before me that food for my own soul is the object of my meditation. The result of this is, that there is always a good deal of confession, thanksgiving, supplication, or intercession mingled with my meditation, and then my inner man almost invariably is even sensibly nourished and strengthened, and that by breakfast time, with rare exceptions, I am in a peaceful if not happy state of heart. Thus also the Lord is pleased to communicate unto me that which, either very soon after or at a later time, I have found to become food for other believers, though it was not for the sake of the public ministry of the Word that I gave myself to meditation, but for the profit of my own inner man.

The difference, then, between my former practice and my present one is this: Formerly, when I rose, I began to pray as soon as possible, and generally spent all my time till breakfast in prayer, or almost all the time. At all events I almost invariably began with prayer, except when I felt my soul to be more than usually barren, in which case I read the Word of God

for food, or for refreshment, or for a revival and renewal of my inner man, before I gave myself to prayer.

But what was the result? I often spent a quarter of an hour, or half an hour, or even an hour, on my knees, before being conscious to myself of having derived comfort, encouragement, humbling of soul, etc., and often, after having suffered much from wandering of mind for the first ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, or even half an hour, I only then began really to pray. I scarcely ever suffer now in this way. For my heart, first being nourished by the truth, being brought into experiential fellowship with God, I then speak to my Father and to my Friend, (vile though I am, and unworthy of it), about the things that He has brought before me in His precious Word.

It often now astonishes me that I did not sooner see this point. In no book did I ever read about it. No public ministry ever brought the matter before me. No private intercourse with a brother stirred me up to this matter. And yet, now, since God has taught me this point, it is as plain to me as anything, that the first thing the child of God has to do morning by morning is, to obtain food for his inner man. As the outward man is not fit for work for any length of time except we take food, and as this is one of the first things we do in the morning, so it should be with the inner man. We should take food for that, as every one must allow.

Now, what is the food for the inner man? Not prayer, but the Word of God; and here again, not the simple reading of the Word of God, so that it only passes through our minds, just as water runs through a pipe, but considering what we read, pondering over it, and applying it to our hearts. When we pray, we speak to God. Now, prayer, in order to be continued for any length of time in any other than a formal manner, requires, generally speaking, a measure of strength or godly desire, and the season, therefore, when this exercise of the soul can be most effectually performed is after the inner man has been nourished by meditation on the Word of God, where we find our Father speaking to us, to encourage us, to comfort us, to instruct us, to humble us, to reprove us. We may therefore profitably meditate, with God's blessing, though we are ever so weak spiritually; nay, the weaker we are, the more we need meditation for the strengthening of our inner man.

Thus there is far less to be feared from wandering of mind than if we give ourselves to prayer without having had time previously for meditation. I dwell so particularly on this point because of the immense spiritual profit and refreshment I am conscious of having derived from it myself, and I affectionately and solemnly beseech all my fellow believers to ponder this matter. By the blessing of God, I ascribe to this mode the help and strength which I have had from God to pass in peace through deeper trials, in various ways, than I had ever had before; and after having now above fourteen years tried this way, I can most fully, in the fear of God, commend it.

In addition to this I generally read, after family prayer, larger portions of the Word of God, when I still pursue my practice of reading regularly onward in the Holy Scriptures, sometimes in the New Testament, and sometimes in the Old, and for more than twenty-six years I have proved the blessedness of it. I take, also, either then or at other parts of the day, time more especially for prayer. How different, when the soul is refreshed and made happy early in the morning, from what it is when without spiritual preparation, the service, the trials, and the temptations of the day come upon one.

## Appendix 2C - Spiritual Disciplines - Introduction

“Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people.” (Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 1)

It’s God’s purpose that spiritual disciplines become an integral part of everyday life for each human being. This includes mothers with children, parents with exhausting jobs, people with sick relatives and extended families to visit.

In a primary sense spiritual disciplines are not difficult. Anyone can practice them. The most important requisite is to thirst for God as the Psalmist when he wrote: “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?” Psalm 42.1-2

Everyone who has been hungry and thirsty for God faces two main problems. The first is philosophic, and it has to do with if it’s really worth it or not to even try; if in reality, we can communicate with a superior Being, distant, all powerful; in other words, to transcend our physical bodies. The second challenge is of practical nature, and that is that we don’t know how to explore the inner life.

When we practice the spiritual disciplines we won’t earn any special merit before God. But, when we do it we place ourselves before God in order to be transformed by Him. Spiritual disciplines in themselves can achieve nothing. But when we practice them, we choose to be planted so God can work in our lives. They are not an end in themselves.

If we make spiritual disciplines simple laws that need to be fulfilled, this would be similar to having the same spirit the Pharisees had characterized by hypocrisy, external appearance, self justification and pride.

Our world desperately needs people who are genuinely changed. Leo Tolstoy wrote: “everybody thinks of changing humanity and nobody thinks of changing himself.” (Ibid, 11)

So the spiritual disciplines are devotional and experiential habits that have been practiced by God’s people throughout the ages since Biblical times. They help us to spend time with God, and in allowing Him to change us. They help to meet God personally.

The objective of practicing the spiritual disciplines is to grow spiritually, it’s to become like Christ (Ephesians 4.13, Romans 8.29). When we practice them we are replacing destroying habits with spiritually growing ones (Romans 8.13). If practice with the correct motivation they would foster change in the way we live, in the purposes we want to achieve in life.

If we want to grow spiritually we better pay attention to Paul’s counsel to young Timothy when he wrote: “Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come” (1 Timothy 4.7-8). We need to train in order to become Godly!

Ellen White wrote: “Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, “Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.” This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ” (Steps to Christ, 70).

Again she writes: “Every morning dedicate yourself, soul, body, and spirit, to God. Establish habits of devotion and trust more and more in your Saviour. You may believe with all confidence that the Lord Jesus loves you and wishes you to grow up to His stature of character. He wishes you to grow in His love, to increase and strengthen in all the fullness of divine love. Then you will gain a knowledge of the highest value for time and for eternity “ (Mind, character and Personality, Volume 1, 16).

Richard Foster divides the most common spiritual disciplines in the following three areas:

**1. INWARD SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES**

- a. Meditation
- b. Prayer
- c. Fasting
- d. Study
- e. Journaling\*
- f. Memorization\*
- g. Presence\*

**2. OUTWARD SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES**

- a. Simplicity
- b. Solitude
- c. Submission
- d. Service
- e. Witnessing\*

**3. CORPORATE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES**

- a. Confession
- b. Worship
- c. Guidance
- d. Celebration

Spiritual disciplines marked with an asterisk (\*) are not presented by foster, but in my personal opinion they have a key role in our spiritual growth.

If you would like to know more about the spiritual disciplines and how to practice them get some of the following helpful resources:

- Recommended books on the subject:
  - Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline
  - Jon Dybdhal, Hunger
  - John Ortberg, The Life You've Always Wanted
  - Eugene Peterson, A Long Obedience in the Same Direction
  - Donald Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life
  - Dallas Willard, The Spirit of the Disciplines.
- Spiritual Disciplines Websites
  - [www.spiritualdisciplines.org](http://www.spiritualdisciplines.org)
  - [www.spirithome.com/spirdisc.html](http://www.spirithome.com/spirdisc.html)

## Appendix 2D - Christ's Devotional Life - With Nature and With God, Ellen White, *Ministry of Healing*, 51-58

The Saviour's life on earth was a life of communion with nature and with God. In this communion He revealed for us the secret of a life of power. {MH 51.1}

Jesus was an earnest, constant worker. Never lived there among men another so weighted with responsibilities. Never another carried so heavy a burden of the world's sorrow and sin. Never another toiled with such self-consuming zeal for the good of men. Yet His was a life of health. Physically as well as spiritually He was represented by the sacrificial lamb, "without blemish and without spot." 1 Peter 1:19. In body as in soul He was an example of what God designed all humanity to be through obedience to His laws. {MH 51.2}

As the people looked upon Jesus, they saw a face in which divine compassion was blended with conscious power. He seemed to be surrounded with an atmosphere of spiritual life. While His manners were gentle and unassuming, He impressed men with a sense of power that was hidden, yet could not be wholly concealed. {MH 51.3}

During His ministry He was continually pursued by crafty and hypocritical men who were seeking His life. Spies were on His track, watching His words, to find some occasion against Him. The keenest and most highly cultured minds of the nation sought to defeat Him in controversy. But never could they gain an advantage. They had to retire from the field, confounded and put to shame by the lowly Teacher from Galilee. Christ's teaching had a freshness and a power such as men had never before known. Even His enemies were forced to confess, "Never man spake like this Man." John 7:46. {MH 51.4}

The childhood of Jesus, spent in poverty, had been uncorrupted by the artificial habits of a corrupt age. Working at the carpenter's bench, bearing the burdens of home life, learning the lessons of obedience and toil, He found recreation amidst the scenes of nature, gathering knowledge as He sought to understand nature's mysteries. He studied the word of God, and His hours of greatest happiness were found when He could turn aside from the scene of His labors to go into the fields, to meditate in the quiet valleys, to hold communion with God on the mountainside or amid the trees of the forest. The early morning often found Him in some secluded place, meditating, searching the Scriptures, or in prayer. With the voice of singing He welcomed the morning light. With songs of thanksgiving He cheered His hours of labor and brought heaven's gladness to the toilworn and disheartened. {MH 52.1}

During His ministry Jesus lived to a great degree an outdoor life. His journeys from place to place were made on foot, and much of His teaching was given in the open air. In training His disciples He often withdrew from the confusion of the city to the quiet of the fields, as more in harmony with the lessons of simplicity, faith, and self-abnegation He desired to teach them. It was beneath the sheltering trees of the mountainside, but a little distance from the Sea of Galilee, that the Twelve were called to the apostolate and the Sermon on the Mount was given. {MH 52.2}

Christ loved to gather the people about Him under the blue heavens, on some grassy hillside, or on the beach beside the lake. Here, surrounded by the works of His own creation, He could turn their thoughts from the artificial to the natural. In the growth and development of nature were revealed the principles of His kingdom. As men should lift their eyes to the hills of God and behold the wonderful works of His hand, they could learn precious lessons of divine truth. In future days the lessons of the divine Teacher would thus be repeated to them by the things of nature. The mind would be uplifted and the heart would find rest. {MH 54.1}

The disciples who were associated with Him in His work, Jesus often released for a season, that they might visit their homes and rest; but in vain were their efforts to draw Him away from His labors. All day He ministered to the throngs that came to Him, and at eventide, or in the early



morning, He went away to the sanctuary of the mountains for communion with His Father. {MH 55.1}

Often His incessant labor and the conflict with the enmity and false teaching of the rabbis left Him so utterly wearied that His mother and brothers, and even His disciples, feared that His life would be sacrificed. But as He returned from the hours of prayer that closed the toilsome day, they marked the look of peace upon His face, the freshness and life and power that seemed to pervade His whole being. From hours spent alone with God He came forth, morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. {MH 55.2}

It was just after the return from their first missionary tour that Jesus bade His disciples, Come apart, and rest awhile. The disciples had returned, filled with the joy of their success as heralds of the gospel, when the tidings reached them of the death of John the Baptist at the hand of Herod. It was a bitter sorrow and disappointment. Jesus knew that in leaving the Baptist to die in prison He had severely tested the disciples' faith. With pitying tenderness He looked upon their sorrowful, tear-stained faces. Tears were in His own eyes and voice as He said, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile." Mark 6:31. {MH 56.1}

Near Bethsaida, at the northern end of the Sea of Galilee, was a lonely region, beautiful with the fresh green of spring, that offered a welcome retreat to Jesus and His disciples. For this place they set out, going in their boat across the lake. Here they could rest, apart from the confusion of the multitude. Here the disciples could listen to the words of Christ, undisturbed by the retorts and accusations of the Pharisees. Here they hoped to enjoy a short season of fellowship in the society of their Lord. {MH 56.2}

Only a short time did Jesus have alone with His beloved ones, but how precious to them were those few moments. They talked together regarding the work of the gospel and the possibility of making their labor more effective in reaching the people. As Jesus opened to them the treasures of truth, they were vitalized by divine power and inspired with hope and courage. {MH 56.3}

But soon He was again sought for by the multitude. Supposing that He had gone to His usual place of retirement, the people followed Him thither. His hope to gain even one hour of rest was frustrated. But in the depth of His pure, compassionate heart the Good Shepherd of the sheep had only love and pity for these restless, thirsting souls. All day He ministered to their needs, and at evening dismissed them to go to their homes and rest. {MH 57.1}

In a life wholly devoted to the good of others, the Saviour found it necessary to turn aside from ceaseless activity and contact with human needs, to seek retirement and unbroken communion with His Father. As the throng that had followed Him depart, He goes into the mountains, and there, alone with God, pours out His soul in prayer for these suffering, sinful, needy ones. {MH 58.1}

When Jesus said to His disciples that the harvest was great and the laborers were few, He did not urge upon them the necessity of ceaseless toil, but bade them, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest." Matthew 9:38. To His toil-worn workers today as really as to His first disciples He speaks these words of compassion, "Come ye yourselves apart, . . . and rest awhile." {MH 58.2}

All who are under the training of God need the quiet hour for communion with their own hearts, with nature, and with God. In them is to be revealed a life that is not in harmony with the world, its customs, or its practices; and they need to have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will of God. We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart. When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us, "Be still, and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10. This is the effectual preparation for all labor for God. Amidst the hurrying throng, and the strain of life's intense activities, he who is thus refreshed will be surrounded with an atmosphere of light and peace. He will receive a new endowment of both physical and mental strength. His life will breathe out a fragrance, and will reveal a divine power that will reach men's hearts. {MH 58.3}

**To think, pray and apply** (after reading Appendix 2D - Christ's Devotional Life)

1. What impresses you the most from Christ Devotional's life?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
  
2. How could you imitate Him in your personal devotional life?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
  
3. How could you set aside time regularly in order to have communion with God? be practical!
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
  
4. What is God inviting you to do from now on? What changes do you need to make to your life?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.

## Appendix 2E – Yearly Bible Reading Plan

## Yearly Bible Reading Plan

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Gen. 1-3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Gen. 4-7 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Gen. 8-11 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Gen. 12-15 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Gen. 16-19 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Gen. 20-22 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 Gen. 23-25 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Gen. 26-27 <input type="checkbox"/> 9 Gen. 28-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 Gen. 31-33 <input type="checkbox"/> 11 Gen. 34-36 <input type="checkbox"/> 12 Gen. 37-39 <input type="checkbox"/> 13 Gen. 40-42 <input type="checkbox"/> 14 Gen. 43-45 <input type="checkbox"/> 15 Gen. 46-47 <input type="checkbox"/> 16 Gen. 48-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 17 Exo. 1-4 <input type="checkbox"/> 18 Exo. 5-8 <input type="checkbox"/> 19 Exo. 9-11 <input type="checkbox"/> 20 Exo. 12-13 <input type="checkbox"/> 21 Exo. 14-15 <input type="checkbox"/> 22 Exo. 16-17 <input type="checkbox"/> 23 Exo. 18-20 <input type="checkbox"/> 24 Exo. 21-23 <input type="checkbox"/> 25 Exo. 24-27 <input type="checkbox"/> 26 Exo. 28-29 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type="checkbox"/> 28 Ps. 68-71 <input type="checkbox"/> 29 Ps. 72-77 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 Ps. 78-80

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

Psalm 119:105

Bible version \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_  
Reader \_\_\_\_\_

JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Ps. 81-85 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Ps. 86-89 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Ps. 90-99 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Ps. 100-105 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Ps. 106-110 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Ps. 111-118 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 Ps. 119 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Ps. 120-134 <input type="checkbox"/> 9 Ps. 135-139 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 Ps. 140-144 <input type="checkbox"/> 11 Ps. 145-150 <input type="checkbox"/> 12 Prov. 1-3 <input type="checkbox"/> 13 Prov. 4-7 <input type="checkbox"/> 14 Prov. 8-11 <input type="checkbox"/> 15 Prov. 12-14 <input type="checkbox"/> 16 Prov. 15-18 <input type="checkbox"/> 17 Prov. 19-21 <input type="checkbox"/> 18 Prov. 22-24 <input type="checkbox"/> 19 Prov. 25-28 <input type="checkbox"/> 20 Prov. 29-31 <input type="checkbox"/> 21 Eccl. 1-4 <input type="checkbox"/> 22 Eccl. 5-8 <input type="checkbox"/> 23 Eccl. 9-12 <input type="checkbox"/> 24 S. of S. 1-4 <input type="checkbox"/> 25 S. of S. 5-8 <input type="checkbox"/> 26 Isa. 1-4 <input type="checkbox"/> 27 Isa. 5-7 <input type="checkbox"/> 28 Isa. 8-10 <input type="checkbox"/> 29 Isa. 11-14 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 Isa. 15-19 <input type="checkbox"/> 31 Isa. 20-23	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Isa. 24-26 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Isa. 27-29 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Isa. 30-33 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Isa. 34-37 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Isa. 38-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Isa. 41-44 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 Isa. 45-48 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Isa. 49-51 <input type="checkbox"/> 9 Isa. 52-55 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 Isa. 56-58 <input type="checkbox"/> 11 Isa. 59-62 <input type="checkbox"/> 12 Isa. 63-66 <input type="checkbox"/> 13 Jer. 1-3 <input type="checkbox"/> 14 Jer. 4-6 <input type="checkbox"/> 15 Jer. 7-9 <input type="checkbox"/> 16 Jer. 10-13 <input type="checkbox"/> 17 Jer. 14-16 <input type="checkbox"/> 18 Jer. 17-19 <input type="checkbox"/> 19 Jer. 20-23 <input type="checkbox"/> 20 Jer. 24-26 <input type="checkbox"/> 21 Jer. 27-29 <input type="checkbox"/> 22 Jer. 30-32 <input type="checkbox"/> 23 Jer. 33-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 24 Jer. 36-38 <input type="checkbox"/> 25 Jer. 39-41 <input type="checkbox"/> 26 Jer. 42-44 <input type="checkbox"/> 27 Jer. 45-48 <input type="checkbox"/> 28 Jer. 49-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 29 Jer. 51-52 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 Lamentations <input type="checkbox"/> 31 Eze. 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Eze. 4-7 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Eze. 8-10 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Eze. 11-13 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Eze. 14-17 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Eze. 18-20 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Eze. 21-23 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 Eze. 24-26 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Eze. 27-29 <input type="checkbox"/> 9 Eze. 30-32 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 Eze. 33-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 11 Eze. 36-38 <input type="checkbox"/> 12 Eze. 39-41 <input type="checkbox"/> 13 Eze. 42-44 <input type="checkbox"/> 14 Eze. 45-48 <input type="checkbox"/> 15 Dan. 1-3 <input type="checkbox"/> 16 Dan. 4-6 <input type="checkbox"/> 17 Dan. 7-9 <input type="checkbox"/> 18 Dan. 10-12 <input type="checkbox"/> 19 Hosea 1-4 <input type="checkbox"/> 20 Hosea 5-9 <input type="checkbox"/> 21 Hosea 10-14 <input type="checkbox"/> 22 Joel <input type="checkbox"/> 23 Amos 1-4 <input type="checkbox"/> 24 Amos 5-9 <input type="checkbox"/> 25 Obad. - Jonah <input type="checkbox"/> 26 Micah 1-4 <input type="checkbox"/> 27 Micah 5-7 <input type="checkbox"/> 28 Nahum <input type="checkbox"/> 29 Habakkuk <input type="checkbox"/> 30 Zephaniah	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Haggai <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Zech. 1-4 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Zech. 5-8 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Zech. 9-11 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Zech. 12-14 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Malachi <input type="checkbox"/> 7 Matt. 1-4 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Matt. 5-7 <input type="checkbox"/> 9 Matt. 8-10 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 Matt. 11-13 <input type="checkbox"/> 11 Matt. 14-16 <input type="checkbox"/> 12 Matt. 17-20 <input type="checkbox"/> 13 Matt. 21-23 <input type="checkbox"/> 14 Matt. 24-26 <input type="checkbox"/> 15 Matt. 27-28 <input type="checkbox"/> 16 Mark 1-3 <input type="checkbox"/> 17 Mark 4-6 <input type="checkbox"/> 18 Mark 7-9 <input type="checkbox"/> 19 Mark 10-12 <input type="checkbox"/> 20 Mark 13-14 <input type="checkbox"/> 21 Mark 15-16 <input type="checkbox"/> 22 Luke 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> 23 Luke 3-5 <input type="checkbox"/> 24 Luke 6-8 <input type="checkbox"/> 25 Luke 9-11 <input type="checkbox"/> 26 Luke 12-14 <input type="checkbox"/> 27 Luke 15-17 <input type="checkbox"/> 28 Luke 18-20 <input type="checkbox"/> 29 Luke 21-22 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 Luke 23-24 <input type="checkbox"/> 31 John 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 John 4-6 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 John 7-9 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 John 10-11 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 John 12-13 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 John 14-15 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 John 16-18 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 John 19-21 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Acts 1-3 <input type="checkbox"/> 9 Acts 4-6 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 Acts 7-9 <input type="checkbox"/> 11 Acts 10-12 <input type="checkbox"/> 12 Acts 13-15 <input type="checkbox"/> 13 Acts 16-18 <input type="checkbox"/> 14 Acts 19-21 <input type="checkbox"/> 15 Acts 22-23 <input type="checkbox"/> 16 Acts 24-26 <input type="checkbox"/> 17 Acts 27-28 <input type="checkbox"/> 18 Rom. 1-4 <input type="checkbox"/> 19 Rom. 5-7 <input type="checkbox"/> 20 Rom. 8-10 <input type="checkbox"/> 21 Rom. 11-13 <input type="checkbox"/> 22 Rom. 14-16 <input type="checkbox"/> 23 1 Cor. 1-4 <input type="checkbox"/> 24 1 Cor. 5-7 <input type="checkbox"/> 25 1 Cor. 8-10 <input type="checkbox"/> 26 1 Cor. 11-13 <input type="checkbox"/> 27 1 Cor. 14-16 <input type="checkbox"/> 28 2 Cor. 1-4 <input type="checkbox"/> 29 2 Cor. 5-7 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 2 Cor. 8-10	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 2 Cor. 11-13 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Gal. 1-3 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Gal. 4-6 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Eph. 1-3 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Eph. 4-6 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Philippians <input type="checkbox"/> 7 Colossians <input type="checkbox"/> 8 1 Thess. <input type="checkbox"/> 9 2 Thess. <input type="checkbox"/> 10 1 Timothy <input type="checkbox"/> 11 2 Timothy <input type="checkbox"/> 12 Titus <input type="checkbox"/> 13 Philemon <input type="checkbox"/> 14 Heb. 1-3 <input type="checkbox"/> 15 Heb. 4-6 <input type="checkbox"/> 16 Heb. 7-9 <input type="checkbox"/> 17 Heb. 10-11 <input type="checkbox"/> 18 Heb. 12-13 <input type="checkbox"/> 19 James <input type="checkbox"/> 20 1 Peter <input type="checkbox"/> 21 2 Peter <input type="checkbox"/> 22 1 John <input type="checkbox"/> 23 2-3 John-Jude <input type="checkbox"/> 24 Rev. 1-3 <input type="checkbox"/> 25 Rev. 4-6 <input type="checkbox"/> 26 Rev. 7-9 <input type="checkbox"/> 27 Rev. 10-11 <input type="checkbox"/> 28 Rev. 12-14 <input type="checkbox"/> 29 Rev. 15-17 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 Rev. 18-19 <input type="checkbox"/> 31 Rev. 20-22

"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Joshua 1:8

**Question and Answers: (7 Minutes)**

- Give time for students to ask questions and provide simple answers.
- Once again, remind students that this is only the beginning and many of their questions will be further answered in the coming sessions

**Explain and review the Practicum: (5 Minutes)**

- Explain once again what the practicum is and how it will help them have a practical experience that goes beyond theory
- Mention what they need to turn in today as it was explained in the previous session
- Emphasize what they need to do for next week's meeting.

**Remind of next week's meeting (2 minutes)**

- Remind people at what time the next training will begin and ask them to be on time!
- Remind of the place of the next training.
- Remind also the materials they need to bring to class
  - GG training manual
  - Pencil, Bible, etc.

**Vision Sharing (3 minutes)**

- Share a story of how GG has helped people reach their friends and grow
- Remind the students of the vision of GG: the vision of our GG is to create a movement that will help each person reach their circle of influence for Christ while helping them grow and mature into Christlikeness

**Prayer**

- End the training with a short prayer.

# GG Leadership Development Program

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



## **Session # 3 - A Kingdom Led Person (to BE)**

### **Objective of session # 3:**

1. Challenge students to establish habits that will foster their ministry and spiritual life.
2. Invite each student to plan and organize their use of time according to God's kingdom.
3. Challenge everyone to live what God has told us by Divine revelation.

### **Materials needed for session:**

1. Bible, GG student manual, white board and markers, pencils and papers.
2. Computer, projector and PPT
3. A clear jar, stones, gravel, sand, and water.
4. Copies of the roles - weekly planner form (Appendix 3F).

**Suggested time for this session:** 90 minutes

### **Optional additional reading materials for the instructor:**

1. Blackaby, H. T., & King, C. V. (2008). *Experiencing God: Knowing and doing the will of God* (Rev. & expanded. ed.). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.
2. Covey, S. R. (2004). *The 7 habits of highly effective people: powerful lessons in personal change* (Rev. ed.). New York, NY: Free Press.
3. Ramsey, D. (2003). *The total money makeover: A proven plan for financial fitness*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.
4. Swenson, R. A. (2004). *Margin: Restoring emotional, physical, financial, and time reserves to overloaded lives*. (Rev. ed.). Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.
5. Warren, R. (2002). *The purpose-driven life: What on earth am I here for?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
6. White, E. G. (1890). *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*.

### **Today's program: Session # 3**

1. Welcome and prayer
2. Thanksgiving:
  - Thank each one for making a being on time and for making this training a priority.
3. Today's session program: Briefly explain today's program
  - Introduction exercises (Welcome, song [optional], prayer, etc)
  - Study of session (fill in the blanks, exercises, discussion in groups, etc)
  - Question and answers
  - Practicum's follow up: Homework!
  - Prayer
4. Introductory exercise
5. Study of Session # 3
6. Time for questions and answers
7. Practicum's follow up: Homework!

8. Vision sharing
9. Prayer

### **Session # 3 - A Kingdom Led Person (to BE)**

#### **Introductory exercise: (7 minutes)**

1. Before the session begin have the clear jar, small stones, gravel, sand and water prepared but hidden under the table.
2. After the initial prayer, without any explanation take the clear jar and put it on top of the table.
3. Begin putting the the big stones inside the jar until you can't add another one.
4. Then ask: is this jar full?
5. Take the gravel and put some of the smaller stones between the bigger stones.
6. Ask again: is the jar now full?
7. Take the sand and pour some of if filling the jar.
8. Ask again: is the jar now full?
9. Take water and pour it on the jar up to the brim.
10. Ask again: is the jar NOW full?
11. Now ask: what can we learn from this little and perhaps well-known experiment? (let people give short answers)
12. Clarify:
  - the point of this illustration is not that it doesn't matter how full your jar might seem, you can always add more things to it!
  - The point is, that if you don't put the big rocks first you won't ever be able to fit them latter! It's about priorities

**Transition (you may say):** *I believe that is what Jesus was trying to teach when he said what we find in today's session key passage. Let read Matthew 6.33...*

#### **1. Key Passage: MATTHEW 6.33**

#### **2. A Kingdom led person main characteristics**

- a. A person who is led by the kingdom of God lives completely different from those around them, so much that people would see the difference, and it will be impossible to hide it.
- b. Focused in **KINGDOM** Priorities
  - i. They seek first, and above all, the kingdom of God, not the American dream or any other dream. Matthew 6.33
  - ii. The priority is to be a friend of God, not of the world. James 4.4
  - iii. Their priority is to please God, and obey Him above family, friends, or own desires. 1 Corinthians 10.31
  - iv. The way they use their time, clearly show their priorities. They make every day count. Psalms 90.12; Eph 5.16

- v. The purpose of a GG leader is to move people on to God's agenda and His priorities.

**Exercise: (5 Minutes)**

- First: Ask students to now write down their priorities in the space below.
  - Be ready to help people do this exercise (you must do it yourself before and use it to see if it is worth it!)
  - Example of priorities: God, self, family, work, student, church, hobbies, etc.
- Second: Ask them now to prioritize them now giving 1 to the most important, 2 to the second important, and so on

vi. **Exercise: Discover your priorities**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

c. Confident of his **IDENTITY**

- i. "If I, even for a moment, accept my culture's definition of me, I'm rendered harmless." (Eugene Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor*, 15)
- ii. There is a great confusion between identity and **ROLE** in our days. (I.R. theory)
  1. We reduce our worth when we confuse our identity with our role
  2. Someone can take away our role, but never our identity
  3. A role is something temporary and is performance-oriented.  
Example: Student, husband, wife, mother, father, son, daughter, salesperson, teacher, accountant, engineer, executive assistant, pastor, elder, and retired.
  4. An identity is something **PERMANENT**, only God can give or change it, and is grace-oriented.
- iii. We need to be absolutely sure of our identity in Christ.
  1. **CREATURES**: All human beings are God's creatures, even if some don't believe it. Genesis 1.26,27; Acts 17.24-26
  2. **SONS & DAUGHTERS** of God: when we accept Jesus we are adopted in the family of God. John 1.12,13; 1 John 3.1,2
  3. **HEIRS**: Galatians 4.7
  4. God's **TREASURED** possession. Exodus 19.5
  5. **HOLY**: Exodus 19.6; Deuteronomy 7.6; 14.2; 1 Peter 2.9,10

6. **ALIENS AND STRANGERS**: 1 Peter 2.11; Psalms 39.12; Hebrews 11.13; 1 Peter 1.17
7. **CITIZENS** of heaven: Ephesians 2.19; Philippians 3.20
8. **PRIESTS** and ministers. 1 Peter 2.9; 2 Corinthians 3.6
9. **AMBASSADORS**: Romans 5.20

d. Pursues his **PURPOSE** in life

- i. Rick Warren points out five main purposes found in the Bible that God created us for. They are:
  1. **WORSHIP** honors God constantly. 1 Corinthians 10.31
  2. **COMMUNION** connected vertical and horizontally in love. John 17. 21; Matthew 22.27
  3. **DISCIPLESHIP** grows into maturity. Ephesians 4.12-13
  4. **MINISTRY** serves others through gifts and talents. 1 Corinthians 4.1
  5. **EVANGELISM** shares making disciples. Matthew 28.19
- ii. If we want to live fulfilling and meaningful lives we need to pursue all of them.
- iii. Consider reading the book: The Purpose Driven Life, by Rick Warren.

e. **CALLED**

- i. A quick comparison between driven and called people
  1. Driven people, are confident they have the **QUALITIES** needed
  2. Called people, they simply know they have been **CALLED** by God
- ii. Case Study: John the Baptist.
  1. Called people understand stewardship. This is to properly manage something for the owner until the owner comes back.
  2. Called people know who they are. "I am not the Christ". People who "private worlds are in disarray tend to get their identities confused."
  3. Called people possess an unwavering sense of purpose.
  4. Called people understand unswerving commitment.

f. **SUBVERSIVE**

- i. Each GG leader is constantly "undermining the kingdom of **SELF** and establishing the kingdom of God." He can say "I'm being subversive." (Eugene Peterson, The Contemplative Pastor, 27)
- ii. Another kingdom is being formed, which is bigger, greater, purer, and more powerful than America's. We represent that kingdom.
- iii. As GG leaders who foster growth, we don't need to help people become what they want. We need to be subversive and undermine their aspirations to conform to this world goals and dreams. People's goals and God's are not the same!
- iv. We need to move people into **GOD'S** agenda.



- v. GG leaders are subversive when they say: truth is not relative, homosexuality is sin, divorce is not God's plan, being busy and running all day is wrong, eating whatever you want is not the Creator's plan, sex before and outside marriage is sin, and that includes oral sex, money is dangerous, etc
- vi. Assumptions of a subversive leader. (Ibid, 34)
  - 1. The **STATUS QUO** is wrong and must be overthrown, replaced.
  - 2. There is another real world that is livable. It's not a dream, it's God's kingdom.
  - 3. The usual means by which kingdoms are thrown out and another is put in its place (military force or democratic election) are not available.
- vii. Jesus and his parables of subversion:
  - 1. "You are the **SALT** of the earth" Matthew 5:13
  - 2. "He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a **MUSTARD** seed, which a man took and planted in his field." Matthew 13:31
  - 3. "He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like **YEAST** that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough." Matthew 13:33
- g. **SELF MOTIVATED**
  - i. There are two kinds of motivations which have great consequences on how we do things
  - ii. **EXTERNAL** Since paid workers can be pressured and offered more money thus producing more results, if given the opportunity to choose, would you prefer to work with them or with volunteers? Examples of external in GG: Covenant signing, empty chair, recognition, pastor invitation, etc.
  - iii. **INTERNAL** .
    - 1. The fire in this case is inside. Here people not only like the idea, they are willing to die for it. Imagine you are going to war, would you like to face paid or volunteers? Have you seen the movie "Brave Heart"? Would you fight with them?
    - 2. "The key to effective disciple making and multiplying is to tap **INTERNAL** motivation." Neil Cole
    - 3. "Christianity begins in a heart that is set on fire from heaven and cannot be quenched on earth. Any incentive less than that will ultimately hurt the cause rather than help it." Neil Cole
    - 4. "If the Spirit of God doesn't grip our hearts and move us to invest our lives in the most important cause of all then no manipulative tactics, gimmicks and persuasions will get the job done." Neil Cole
- h. **ORGANIZED** and **PLANNED**

- i. Consider the following quotes:
  1. "He who fails to plan, plans to fail", well known proverb.
  2. "Failures don't plan to fail, they fail to plan." Harvey MacKay, author and motivational speaker
  3. "There is an almost universal quest for easy answers and half-baked solutions. Nothing pains some people more than having to think." Martin Luther King Jr.
- ii. Consider Luke 14.28-30, Proverbs 16.3
- iii. GG leader must plan their days ahead of time or they risk not doing what is important for the kingdom of God
- iv. Organize your week with a planner (paper or electronic)
- v. How to do it?
  1. Define the roles God is moving you to have in your life. (Mat 6.33)
  2. Describe the things that need to be done under each role.
  3. Review it every day. Plan the previous night.
  4. Evaluate often and adjust under God's guidance
- vi. See example in Appendix 3F.

**Exercise: (10 Minutes)**

- Ask students to take time now and write down their roles in life.
- Again, be ready to help people do this exercise (you must do it yourself before and use it to see if it is worth it!)
- Example of roles: disciple, personal, husband, father, pastor, GG leader, etc
- Ask students to write their identified roles in the weekly planner that you are handing them (Appendix 3F).
- Ask them now to write activities under each one of the roles in the columns at the left hand
- Ask them to write those activities in the weekly calendar
- Organize the week trying to fill the important elements first.

**i. DISCIPLINED**

- i. There are two kinds of discipline we are exposed to as humans: Self discipline and external discipline.
  1. **EXTERNAL** discipline comes from outside. When a parent ask his teenager to stop playing videogames or takes it away from him so he would do homework
  2. **INTERNAL** discipline comes from the person. The teenager decides by himself to stop playing video games because he will use that time to do homework or learn to play an instrument. It's eating only the amount of food needed. This is what the Bible calls self-control.

ii. **SELF CONTROL**

1. Self control it's a fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5.23
2. Other passages:
  - a. Man should control his temper, Proverbs 16.32;
  - b. God has given us a spirit of self-discipline, 2 Timothy 1.7;
  - c. Add self-control, 2 Peter 1.6

iii. Ellen White and **DISCIPLINE**:

1. **Never underrate the importance of little things.** Little things supply the actual discipline of life. It is by them that the soul is **TRAINED** that it may grow into the likeness of Christ, or bear the likeness of evil. God helps us to cultivate habits of thought, word, look, and action that will testify to all about us that we have been with Jesus and learned of Him!--The Youth's Instructor, March 9, 1893
2. Many children, for want of words of encouragement and a little assistance in their efforts, become disheartened and change from one thing to another. And they carry this sad defect with them in mature life. They fail to make a **SUCCESS** of anything they engage in, for they have not been taught to **PERSEVERE** under discouraging circumstances. Thus the entire lifetime of many proves a failure, because they did not have correct **DISCIPLINE** when young. The education received in childhood and youth affects their entire business career in mature life, and their religious experience bears a corresponding stamp. (CG 128.2)
3. Only One Day Is Mine.--Day by day we are all to be trained, disciplined, and educated for usefulness in this life. Only one day at a time--think of this. One day is mine. I will in this one day do my best. I will use my talent of speech to be a blessing to some other one, a helper, a comforter, an example which the Lord my Saviour shall approve. I will exercise myself in patience, kindness, forbearance, that the Christian virtues may be developed in me today. 1MCP 15.2

j. **APOCALYPTIC**

- i. 1 Chronicles 12.32 "from Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do—200 chiefs, with all their relatives under their command"
- ii. GG leaders must have a strong sense of urgency knowing that "the kingdom of heaven is near" (Mat 4.7)
- iii. Leaders need to be bold and clearly call people to repent as Jesus did, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near" (Mat 4.17)

- iv. GG leaders are called today to have a ministry like John the Baptist, “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.” (Mat 11.10)

k. **GROWS**

- i. Stephen Covey calls it “**SHARPENING** the saw” (in his bestselling book *The seven habits of highly effective people*)
- ii. Consider reading the book *The seven habits*, by S Covey. Please read it carefully, discern, apply, evaluate and adjust!
- iii. Ellen G. White says: “Every morning dedicate yourself, soul, body, and spirit, to God. Establish habits of devotion and trust more and more in your Saviour. You may believe with all confidence that the Lord Jesus loves you and wishes you to grow up to His stature of character. He wishes you to grow in His love, to increase and strengthen in all the fullness of divine love. Then you will gain a knowledge of the highest value for time and for eternity.--Lt 36, 1901.

3. Makes good use of **RESOURCES**

a. **TIME** Management

- i. Read Ephesians 5.15-17
- ii. Time management is misleading.
- iii. Henry Blackaby argues in his book *Spiritual leadership* (p. 200-201) that:
  - 1. “what leaders can manage is **THEMSELVES**.”
  - 2. “wise leaders refuse to allow life’s demands to control their schedule or their priorities.”
  - 3. “great leaders don’t allow their busy lives or their vast responsibilities to overwhelm them. Rather, they become the master of their schedules through determined and conscientious effort.”
  - 4. “Spiritual leaders also understand that God has granted them enough time to accomplish any assignment **HE GIVES** them. The key to successful leadership is not creating more time in one’s life or packing more activities into one’s day, but staying on God’s agenda.”
- iv. It is a fact that “where your priorities are, there your time will be.” (*Ordering your private world*, 72).
- v. Principles for time management, from Jesus life.
  - 1. Understand your mission
  - 2. Understand your own limits
  - 3. Set time aside to train others

- vi. Why do people **PROCRASTINATE**
  - 1. Don't know where to start.
  - 2. To avoid an unpleasant task.
  - 3. We're afraid to fail.
  - 4. Waiting for more information.
  - 5. You may think if you put it off someone else will do it.
  - 6. You're over-committed.
  - 7. How to overcome procrastination
    - a. You *do not* work best under pressure.
    - b. List the things you have been avoiding. Prioritize them. Try to do at least one of them each day until you catch up.
- vii. **IMPORTANT** practices (Henry Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership, 202-226)
  - 1. Leaders seek to understand God's will.
  - 2. Leaders say no.
  - 3. Leaders cultivate healthy routines.
  - 4. Leaders delegate.
  - 5. Leaders use Focused concentration
  - 6. Leaders make time for the important.
  - 7. Leaders avoid time wasters.
  - 8. Leaders invest their surplus time wisely.
- viii. Laws of **UNSEIZED** time (Gordon McDonald)
  - 1. Unseized time flows toward my weaknesses
  - 2. Unseized time comes under the influence of dominant people in my world
  - 3. Unseized time surrenders to the demands of all emergencies
  - 4. Unseized time gets invested in things that gain public acclamation
- ix. Stephen Covey's **TIME** Management Matrix
  - 1. Consider the following Matrix and identified where do you spend most of your time.

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crisis</li> <li>• Pressing problems</li> <li>• Deadline-driven</li> <li>• Projects, meetings, preparations</li> </ul>	2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation</li> <li>• Prevention</li> <li>• Values clarification</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Relationship building</li> <li>• True re-creation</li> <li>• Empowerment</li> </ul>
NOT IMPORTANT	3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interruptions, some phone calls</li> <li>• Some mail, some reports</li> <li>• Some meetings</li> <li>• Many proximate, pressing matters</li> <li>• Many popular activities</li> </ul>	4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trivia, busywork</li> <li>• Some phone calls</li> <li>• Time wasters</li> <li>• 'escape' activities</li> <li>• Irrelevant mail</li> <li>• Excessive TV, internet</li> </ul>

**b. TREASURES**

- i. Read Luke 12.34
- ii. Consider creating and maintain with your spouse a monthly/annual budget.
- iii. You could find helpful the book: *The total money makeover: A proven plan for financial fitness* by Dave Ramsey
- iv. Live with simplicity and margin. (See Appendix 3D)
- v. Practice contentment and it's secret. (Phil 4.11-13)

**c. TALENTS**

- i. Honor the Lord with your God given gifts and natural abilities.
- ii. Make sure you do the "Spiritual Gifts Survey" (Appendix 9A)
- iii. The point of finding your gift is to discover a way in which to bless others through them.
- iv. Luke 12.48 "...From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded"
- v. Ellen G. White writes: "We shall individually be held responsible for doing one jot less than we have ability to do. The Lord measures with exactness every possibility for service. The unused capabilities are as much brought into account as are those that are improved. For all that we might become through the right use of our talents God holds us responsible. We shall be judged according to what we ought to have

done, but did not accomplish because we did not use our powers to glorify God. Even if we do not lose our souls, we shall realize in eternity the result of our unused talents. For all the knowledge and ability that we might have gained and did not, there will be an eternal loss.” COL 362.6

**d. TEMPLE**

- i. Every GG leader must recognize the high privilege and responsibility he has in maintaining a healthy body.
- ii. Prayerfully consider the Health Reform message presented more than a century ago by Ellen G. White in her books:
  1. Healthful Living (1898, compilation)
  2. Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene (1890)
  3. Ministry of Healing (1909)
  4. Counsels on Diet and Foods (1938, a posthumous compilation)
  5. Counsels on Health (1951, a posthumous compilation)
- iii. Profusely use the 8 natural **REMEDIES**: NEW START
  1. Nutrition
  2. Exercise
  3. Water
  4. Sun
  5. Temperance
  6. Air
  7. Rest
  8. Trust in God

**4. Recommended reading**

- a. Blackaby, H. T., & King, C. V. (2008). *Experiencing God: Knowing and doing the will of God* (Rev. & expanded. ed.). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.
- b. Covey, S. R. (2004). *The 7 habits of highly effective people: powerful lessons in personal change* (Rev. ed.). New York, NY: Free Press.
- c. Ramsey, D. (2003). *The total money makeover: A proven plan for financial fitness*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.
- d. Swenson, R. A. (2004). *Margin: Restoring emotional, physical, financial, and time reserves to overloaded lives*. (Rev. ed.). Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.
- e. Warren, R. (2002). *The purpose-driven life: What on earth am I here for?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- f. White, E. G. (1890). *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*.

**Explain: (5 Minutes)**

- Ask the students to go now to the Appendix material of this session.
- Explain the value of each material
- Encourage them to read, meditate, and decide to make changes in order to grow into Christlikeness.

**5. Appendix for you to review, meditate upon and grow.**

- a. Appendix 3A - Use of Time: Practice Good Work Habits – Ellen White’s letter to her 27-year-old son Edson
- b. Appendix 3B - Facing Life’s Record: Ellen White – Great Controversy (portion of chapter 28)
- c. Appendix 3C – Prescriptions for health (from the book Margin, by Richard A. Swenson)
- d. Appendix 3D - Simplicity Suggestions (from the book Margin, by Richard A. Swenson, 177-180)
- e. Appendix 3E - Organizing our world: Symptoms and Memo: (From Ordering your private World, by Gordon MacDonald, 19-176)
- f. Appendix 3F – Planning your week (with roles and actions) - by Denis Sand



### Appendix 3A - Use of Time: Practice Good Work Habits – Ellen White’s letter to her 27-year-old son Edson

“Observe people who are good at their work— skilled workers are always in demand and admired; they don't take a backseat to anyone.” Proverbs 22.29 (MSS)

Dear son Edson: I fear that you do not always wisely regulate your labor. You sometimes do too much, and then allow precious hours to pass unimproved, thus creating a necessity for extra exertion. Temperate, persevering, steady labor will achieve far more than can be accomplished by spasmodic efforts. . . .

Labor was appointed to man by his Creator. God provided employment for our first parents in holy Eden. And since the Fall, man has been a toiler, eating his bread by the sweat of his brow. Every bone of his body, every feature of his countenance, every muscle of his limbs, evinces the fact that he was made for activity, not for idleness. . . .

The faithful discharge of life's duties, whatever your position, calls for a wise improvement of all the talents and abilities that God has given you. Guard against being always hurried, yet accomplishing nothing worthy of the effort. These fruitless efforts are often caused by a failure to do the work at the proper time. Whatever is neglected at the time when it should be performed, whether in secular or in religious things, is rarely done well. Many appear to labor diligently every hour in the day, and yet produce no results to correspond with their efforts. . . .

Be careful not to fritter away your time upon trifles, and then fail to carry out your undertakings that are of real account. The church and the world need calm, well-balanced men. To run well for a season is not enough. A steadfast adherence to a purpose is necessary in order to secure the end. A distinguished man was once asked how it was possible for him to accomplish such a vast amount of business. His answer was, "I do one thing at a time." . . .

Henry Martyn, both as a man and a missionary, depended not a little upon his habits of regularity. To such an extent did he carry these, that he was known in the university as the student who never wasted an hour. . . . How many youth who might have become men of usefulness and power have failed because in early life they contracted habits of indecision which followed them through life to cripple all their efforts. Now and then they are filled with sudden zeal to do some great thing, but they leave their work half finished and it comes to nothing. Patient continuance in well doing is indispensable to success.

My dear son, be thorough in all you undertake. Rely constantly upon your Saviour; go to Him for wisdom, for courage, for strength of purpose, for everything you need. May the Lord bless you is the prayer of your mother.--Letter 3, May 12, 1877, to her 27-year-old son Edson. {UL 146.7}

## Appendix 3B - Facing Life's Record: Ellen White – Great Controversy (portion of chapter 28)

“Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” Psalm 90:12 NIV

How solemn is the thought! Day after day, passing into eternity, bears its burden of records for the books of heaven. Words once spoken, deeds once done, can never be recalled. Angels have registered both the good and the evil. The mightiest conqueror upon the earth cannot call back the record of even a single day. Our acts, our words, even our most secret motives, all have their weight in deciding our destiny for weal or woe. Though they may be forgotten by us, they will bear their testimony to justify or condemn. {GC 486.3}

As the features of the countenance are reproduced with unerring accuracy on the polished plate of the artist, so the character is faithfully delineated in the books above. Yet how little solicitude is felt concerning that record which is to meet the gaze of heavenly beings. Could the veil which separates the visible from the invisible world be swept back, and the children of men behold an angel recording every word and deed, which they must meet again in the judgment, how many words that are daily uttered would remain unspoken, how many deeds would remain undone. {GC 487.1}

In the judgment the use made of every talent will be scrutinized. How have we employed the capital lent us of Heaven? Will the Lord at His coming receive His own with usury? Have we improved the powers entrusted us, in hand and heart and brain, to the glory of God and the blessing of the world? How have we used our time, our pen, our voice, our money, our influence? What have we done for Christ, in the person of the poor, the afflicted, the orphan, or the widow? God has made us the depositaries of His holy word; what have we done with the light and truth given us to make men wise unto salvation? No value is attached to a mere profession of faith in Christ; only the love which is shown by works is counted genuine. Yet it is love alone which in the sight of Heaven makes any act of value. Whatever is done from love, however small it may appear in the estimation of men, is accepted and rewarded of God. {GC 487.2}

The hidden selfishness of men stands revealed in the books of heaven. There is the record of unfulfilled duties to their fellow men, of forgetfulness of the Saviour's claims. There they will see how often were given to Satan the time, thought, and strength that belonged to Christ. Sad is the record which angels bear to heaven. Intelligent beings, professed followers of Christ, are absorbed in the acquirement of worldly possessions or the enjoyment of earthly pleasures. Money, time, and strength are sacrificed for display and self-indulgence; but few are the moments devoted to prayer, to the searching of the Scriptures, to humiliation of soul and confession of sin. {GC 487.3}

Satan invents unnumbered schemes to occupy our minds, that they may not dwell upon the very work with which we ought to be best acquainted. The archdeceiver hates the great truths that bring to view an atoning sacrifice and an all-powerful mediator. He knows that with him everything depends on his diverting minds from Jesus and His truth. {GC 488.1}

Those who would share the benefits of the Saviour's mediation should permit nothing to interfere with their duty to perfect holiness in the fear of God. The precious hours, instead of being given to pleasure, to display, or to gain seeking, should be devoted to an earnest, prayerful study of the word of truth. The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill. Every individual has a soul to save or to lose. Each has a case pending at the bar of God. Each must meet the great Judge face to face. How important, then, that every mind contemplate often the solemn scene when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, when, with Daniel, every individual must stand in his lot, at the end of the days. {GC 488.2}

All who have received the light upon these subjects are to bear testimony of the great truths which God has committed to them. The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ's work in behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth. It opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin. It is of the utmost importance that all should thoroughly investigate these subjects and be able to give an answer to everyone that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them. {GC 488.3}

## Appendix 3C – Prescriptions for health (from the book Margin, by Richard A. Swenson)

### 1. Emotional energy

- a. Cultivate social supports
- b. Pet a surrogate
- c. Reconcile relationships
- d. Serve one another
- e. Rest
- f. Laugh
- g. Cry
- h. Create appropriate boundaries
- i. Envision a better future
- j. Offer thanks
- k. Grant grace
- l. Be rich in faith
- m. Hold fast hope
- n. Above all, love

### 2. Physical energy

- a. Take responsibility
- b. Gain physical margin through emotional margin
- c. Change habits
- d. Value sleep
- e. Develop healthy sleep patterns
- f. Don't catastrophize
- g. Don't oversleep
- h. Take a nap
- i. Exercise for sounder sleep
- j. Decrease intake of fat, sugar and total calories
- k. Replace processed snacks fruit
- l. Avoid overeating
- m. Garden or buy direct
- n. Drink a lot of water
- o. Use exercise as both appetite and weight reducer
- p. McStay at home
- q. Exercise for the heart
- r. Exercise for the muscles
- s. Exercise for flexibility
- t. Exercise for the mind and spirit
- u. Bike or walk
- v. Choose what works for you
- w. Stick with it
- x. Be realistic

### 3. Margin in time

- a. Expect the unexpected
- b. Learn to say no
- c. Turn off the television
- d. Prune the activity branches
- e. Practice simplicity and contentment
- f. Separate time from technology
- g. Short term flurry versus long term vision
- h. Thank god
- i. Sabotage your fuse box
- j. Get less done but do the right things
- k. Enjoy anticipation, relish the memories
- l. Don't rush wisdom
- m. For type A's only: stand in line
- n. Create buffer zones
- o. Plan for free time
- p. Be available

### 4. Margin in finances

- a. Travel in the right direction: Lordship
- b. Break its back
- c. Counter culture
- d. "Live within your harvest"
- e. Discipline desires and redefine needs
- f. Decrease spending
- g. Increase income
- h. Increase savings
- i. Make a budget
- j. Discard credit cards
- k. Don't mortgage the future
- l. Resist impulses
- m. Share, lend, borrow
- n. Emphasize usefulness over fashion
- o. Fast
- p. Kingdom first

**Appendix 3D - Simplicity Suggestions** (from the book *Margin*, by Richard A. Swenson, 177-180)**1. Possessions and finances**

- a. Cultivate contentment, desire less
- b. Resist covetousness
- c. Resist consumerism
- d. Wage war against advertisements
- e. Buy things for their usefulness rather than their status
- f. De-accumulate
- g. Develop the habit of giving away
- h. Share possessions
- i. Offer the use of your possessions – don't make others ask
- j. Develop a network of exchange
- k. Avoiding overindulging – for example, toys, food, movie viewing, etc.
- l. Avoid impulse buying
- m. Don't buy anything if the time and money spent on it compete with family, service, and God
- n. Avoid debt if possible
- o. Don't buy now, pay later
- p. Avoid credit cards if they are a problem
- q. Reject fashion, especially fads
- r. De-emphasize respectability
- s. Simplify your wardrobe – give away excess
- t. Learn how to make do with a lower income instead of needing a higher one

**2. Pace and atmosphere**

- a. Slow down
- b. Do not exhaust your emotional bank account
- c. Lie fallow
- d. Say no
- e. Enjoy peaceful music
- f. Control/restrict/eliminate television watching; surfing the net
- g. Get a remote control and turn off advertisements

**3. Relationships**

- a. Cultivate a closeness with God
- b. Schedule "simple" dates with your spouse

- c. Teach your children
- d. Enjoy family field trips
- e. Practice regular hospitality
- f. Help each other, emphasize service
- g. Encourage others
- h. "always speak the truth and you'll never be concerned with your memory"
- i. Don't judge
- j. Learn to enjoy

**4. Appreciation**

- a. Send cards of encouragement and appreciation when others are not expecting it
- b. Be grateful for things large and small
- c. Emphasize a joyful life
- d. Appreciate creation

**5. Spiritual life**

- e. Make the word central
- f. Meditate, memorize
- g. Pray
- h. Encourage simple worship

**6. Activities**

- i. Make your commitments simple
- j. Don't overwork
- k. Fast periodically from media, food, people
- l. Elevate reading, go to the library
- m. Simplify Christmas
- n. Write down those things you need to remember and forget everything else

**7. Nutrition and exercise**

- o. Exercise
- p. Bike or walk
- q. Make your recreation active rather than passive
- r. Develop healthy sleep habits
- s. Avoid overeating
- t. Frequent a co-op
- u. Whenever possible, buy food directly from those who grow it
- v. Garden it

### Appendix 3E - Organizing our world: Symptoms and Memo: (From Ordering your private World, by Gordon MacDonald, 19-176)

1. Symptoms of disorganization
  - a. My desk takes on a cluttered appearance
  - b. The condition of my car
  - c. Diminution of my self-esteem
  - d. Series of forgotten appointments, telephone messages to which I have failed to respond, and deadlines which I have begun to miss
  - e. Invest energies in unproductive tasks
  - f. Feel poor about their work
  - g. "Disorganized Christians rarely enjoy intimacy with God."
  - h. A state of disorganization it's revealed in the quality of my personal relationships
2. Memo to the disorganized
  - a. If my private world is in order, it will be because I am convinced that the inner world of the spiritual must govern the outer world of activity
  - b. If my private world is in order, it will be because I make a daily choice to monitor its state of orderliness."
  - c. If my private world is in order, it will be because I recognize my proneness to operate according to schemes and patterns not made of God but fashioned by a disordered past.
  - d. If my private world is in order, it will be because, having faced up to what drives me, I listen quietly for the call of Christ.
  - e. If my private world is in order, it will be because I see myself as Christ's steward and not as master of my purpose, my role, and my identity.
  - f. "If my private world is in order it will be because I have made a daily determination to see time as God's gift and worthy of careful investment."
  - g. If my private world is in order, it will be because I have begun to seal the "time leaks" and allocate my productive hours in the light of my capabilities, my limits, and my priorities.
  - h. if my private world is in order, it will be because I have determined that every day will be for me a day of growth in knowledge and wisdom.
  - i. If my private world is in order, it will be because I seek to use all I learn in service to others, as Christ did.
  - j. If my private world is in order, it will be because I regularly choose to enlarge the spiritual center of my life.
  - k. If my private world is in order, it will be because I am unafraid to be alone and quiet before Christ.
  - l. If my private world is in order, it will be because I absorb the words of Christ into my attitudes and actions.
  - m. if my private world is in order, it will be because I begun to pursue the discipline of seeing events and people through the eyes of Christ so that my prayers reflect my desire to be in alignment with His purpose and promises for them.
  - n. If my private world is in order, it will be because I have chose to press Sabbath peace into the rush and routine of my daily life in order to find the rest God prescribed for Himself and all of humanity.
  - o. If my private world is in order, it will be because I have made a deliberate decision to being the "ordering" process... Now!"

## Appendix 3F – Planning your week (with roles and actions) - by Denis Sand

Roles & Plans		to __ / __ / 2011						
	10	20						
	11	21						
	12	22						
	13	23						
	14	24						
	15	25						
	16	26						
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	78	88						
	79	89						

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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Roles & Plans		__ to __ / __ / 2011	
Disciple	Personal devotion	10	Personal
	Steps to Christ	11	Plan week
	Sabbath School	12	Clean Room
	Fest	13	Wash clothes
	Help in church	14	Eat
	Student worship	15	Exercise
		16	Bicycle
		17	
		18	
		19	
Student			
Son/Dad/Husb	Prepare Kyrg Prese	30	Date with wife
	classes	31	
	English classes	32	
		33	
		34	
		35	
		36	
		37	
		38	
		39	
GG leader			
Missionary	Study Dialogue # 5	50	Olga
		51	Rajmon
		52	Acasana
		53	
		54	
		55	
		56	
		57	
		58	
		59	

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
5:00							
5:30			10				
6:00		10 (Pers Dev)					
6:30			22				
7:00		15	15	15	15	15	
7:30							
8:00		31					
8:30							
9:00	50						
9:30							
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1:30							
2:00	BS old lady						
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**Question and Answers: (5 Minutes)**

- Give time for students to ask questions and provide simple answers.
- Remind everyone that instructors will be available after the session if they have further questions or comments

**Explain and review the Practicum: (5 Minutes)**

- Explain once again what the practicum is and how it will help them have a practical experience that goes beyond theory
- Mention what they need to turn in today as it was explained in the previous session
- Emphasize what they need to do for next week's meeting.

**Remind of next week's meeting (2 minutes)**

- Remind people at what time the next training will begin and ask them to be on time!
- Remind of the place of the next training.
- Remind also the materials they need to bring to class
  - GG training manual
  - Pencil, Bible, etc.

**Vision Sharing (3 minutes)**

- Ask students why are we doing this?
- The vision of our GG is to create a movement of groups that will help each person reach those in their circle of influence, help people grow into mature disciples of Jesus and be ready for his second coming

**Prayer**

- End the training with a short prayer in groups.



# GG Leadership Development Program

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



## **Session # 4 – Lead Group Life (to DO)**

### **Objective of session # 4:**

1. Help students to clearly see and analyze God's plan for living in community.
2. Challenge students to change their way of living and move into a missional lifestyle.

### **Materials needed for session:**

1. Bible, GG student manual, white board and markers, pencils and papers.
2. Computer, projector and PPT

**Suggested time for this session:** 90 minutes

### **Optional additional reading materials for the instructor:**

1. Boren, M. S. (2010). *Missional small groups: Becoming a community that makes a difference in the world*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
2. Boren, M. S. (2011). *Missiorelate*. Houston, TX: TOUCH Publications.
3. Earley, D. (2001). *The 8 habits of effective small group leaders*. Houston, TX: Cell Group Resources.

### **Today's program: Session # 4**

1. Welcome and prayer
2. Thanksgiving:
  - Thank each one for reading, studying and working hard to become GG leaders.
3. Today's session program: Briefly explain today's program
  - Introduction exercises (Welcome, song [optional], prayer, etc)
  - Study of session (fill in the blanks, exercises, discussion in groups, etc)
  - Question and answers
  - Practicum's follow up: Homework!
  - Prayer
4. Introductory exercise
5. Study of Session # 4
6. Time for questions and answers
7. Practicum's follow up: Homework!
8. Vision sharing
9. Prayer

## **Session # 4 – Lead Group Life (to DO)**

### ***Introductory exercise: (5 minutes)***

1. Choose from one of the following or create your own community building activity.
  - Ask for a volunteer. Ask that person to climb on top of a table and drop himself face up with hands on chest. Select a small student. Ask the small student to hold the student who will drop from the table. Ask 1<sup>st</sup> volunteer if he feels comfortable doing this or if he would prefer several students to receive him when he falls. Have eight students to form a 'human bed' with their arms to receive the student who will drop from the table.
  - Consider having lunch/dinner together before this session begins. This will foster greater community among the students.

***Transition (you may say):*** Life is always better when lived in community and even better when lived in missional communities. And that is today's topic. Group life in the context of mission. And for that reason let's begin by reading Acts 2.42-47...

### **1. Key Passage: ACTS 2.42-47**

### **2. The need of learning to live life DIFFERENTLY**

- a. Scott Boren proposes that "most people live according to the rhythms that have been shaped by a broader culture. Even in our churches this is the case, although most of us don't want to think that we live like those who don't know Jesus. But the REALITY is that church people work just as many hours per week, watch just as much television, spend their money in similar ways, and have just as many family struggles as the unchurched" " (Boren, 2010, p. 45).
- b. The way we live life is mainly defined by the CULTURE we grew up and the one we now live in.
- c. Most of us didn't choose the culture in which we were born, but we might have chosen the one we live in today. Either way, culture is absorbed into our lives until we practically don't see it.
- d. We hardly realize there are other ways of living life unless we leave our own culture and are confronted with a different culture and view of life.
- e. What is culture? Randy Frazee basically described culture as "the sum total of WAYS OF LIVING built up by a human community and transmitted from one generation to another"
- f. The way we use our time and resources, the things we value and consider having beauty, our goals and dreams, life's purpose and what it means to be successful, the value of things and relationships, they all are learned and imitated from our culture.
- g. But, thank God, the way we live life is also influenced by the principles, values, the faith and hope we have.

- h. The way we live life is ultimately a CHOICE we all need to make, and for which we are RESPONSIBLE.
- i. As Christians we are called to a completely different way of life. A life that is mostly influenced and determined by God's eternal PRINCIPLES than by our own culture.
- j. This new way of life is then not only a choice, but also something that needs to be LEARNED.
- k. Read the following texts discover the reality of the new life
  - i. 2 CORINTHIANS 5.17-20 This passage describes a new creation, a new life, a new mission and purpose in life.
  - ii. GALATIANS 2.20 He no longer lives the life he wants, but the one lived by faith in Jesus.
  - iii. 1 PETER 4.3,4 It's enough of living as everyone else lives in our culture or as we once lived!
  - iv. EPHESIANS 4.17-23 You can't continue to live as gentiles do! Put off old way of life (v22)
  - v. This is in essence a new way of living, it's life in the kingdom of God.
- l. A new and holistic life is the one which fulfills God's DESIGN and PURPOSE for our lives. God wants us to live to worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and evangelism (or as our youth ministry calls it to honor, connect, grow, serve and share)
  - i. There are two crucial elements in this new life:
    - 1. COMMUNITY: this fosters each one of the five purposes while bringing growth and joy. All these purposes are more easily fulfilled not in isolation but actually in community. So, live in community!
    - 2. MISSION: we have been entrusted by God with the privilege of making more disciples. This needs to be the key reorganizing factor in our new way of living. Live life in mission!

### 3. What is Group life?

- a. Group life is NOT an event, a task to fulfill, or even something that you can check off as being completed.
- b. Group life is what the group EXPERIENCES during the 6 days and 22 hours that they have outside of the group meeting.
- c. Group life is more than a meeting; it is complete different way of doing life.
- d. Method: Group life requires personal interaction and it must be motivated by a deep love for God and people.
- e. Place: It takes place wherever persons meet, interact and experience life. It can be at a supermarket, school, park, church and even over the phone or internet.

- f. The GOALS of Group Life:
  - i. To become the FAMILY of God
    - 1. Family provides a great metaphor of what a GG Life should become
    - 2. Families are families 24/7, with no breaks!
    - 3. In a healthy family we don't choose whether or not to relate to one another. We just do it, because we are family!
    - 4. Family members "rub shoulders" with each other. That also means:
      - a. They help one another
      - b. They are willing to sacrifice for one another
      - c. They ask for forgiveness and forgive one another
      - d. They solve conflicts and confront one another
      - e. They supply for the needs of one another
  - ii. To be Christ's BODY
    - 1. As each Christian unites himself with God, he is also united to Christ's body of believers
    - 2. Christ himself is the head of this body
    - 3. Being one body means we all have different functions and expertise, but we all share a common purpose and mission.
    - 4. Christ's body works passionately to fulfill God's mission of making more disciples for the kingdom
    - 5. The body unifies its members and coordinates their action for success
  - iii. To be HOLISTIC
    - 1. Each group aims to fulfill God's purposes of worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and evangelism
    - 2. A holistic group is a healthy group that is balanced in its life and activities
- g. DURATION of Group life
  - i. There is not on/off button for group life.
  - ii. Group life lasts only 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and they 365 days of the year.
  - iii. At three AM when the phone rings and the caller is someone from my group, I respond because we are family and he might be in need of my help.
- h. COST of group life:
  - i. It has been said that salvation is free but discipleship will cost you everything!
  - ii. Group life will not be free. The cost will be felt in our time, money, and many times even in our belongings.
  - iii. It is an INVESTMENT in those around us and finally in eternity.

- i. What should a group DO in order to have group life?
  - i. The key elements of group life are described in the Bible with the myriad of verses that talk about what we need to do for one another or each other.
  - ii. The following list can very well serve as the JOB DESCRIPTION of group life.
  - iii. So, if you want to have real authentic group life, practice the following essentials with your GG:
    1. LOVE one another. John 13.34; 1 Peter 1.22; 1 John 4.12
    2. Be DEVOTED to one another. Romans 12.10
    3. HONOR one another. Romans 12.10
    4. RESTORE one another. Galatians 6.1
    5. EDIFY one another. 1 Thessalonians 5.11
    6. INSTRUCT one another. Rom 15.14
    7. FORGIVE one another. Ephesians 4.32; Colossians 3.13
    8. PRAY for one another. James 5.16
    9. SERVE one another. Galatians 5.13
    10. Offer HOSPITALITY to one another. 1 Peter 4.9
    11. TEACH and admonish one another. Colossians 3.16
    12. CARRY each other burdens. Galatians 6.2
    13. Be PATIENT with one another. Ephesians 4.2
    14. SUBMIT to one another out of reverence for Christ. Ephesians 5.21
    15. Have FELLOWSHIP with one another. 1 John 1.7
    16. ENCOURAGE each other. 1 Thessalonians 4.18; 5.11; Hebrews 3.13
    17. CONFESS your sins to each other. James 5.16
    18. ACCEPT one another. Romans 15.7
    19. BEAR with each other. Colossians 3.13
    20. GREET one another with a kiss of love. 1 Peter 5.14

#### 4. Advantages of having group life

- a. Real LIFE

Many groups have great meetings, but life stops when the meeting is over. Most groups will turn off the light of the group only to turn it on again at the next weekly meeting. The group meeting, which is about two hours a week, cannot be enough if we are called to be the light atop the hill (Matthew 5.14-16)!
- b. VITALITY

“The test of a group’s vitality does not occur primarily while the group is meeting; it occurs AFTER the meeting is over. The vitality of the original Christian movement was not demonstrated by the meetings they held, of which we have some limited knowledge, but by the way in which Christians provided an antidote to the loss of nerve and to the moral sag of the ancient world.” Elton Trueblood.

- c. Personal GROWTH We grow much more as disciples in interaction with other human beings who have the same challenges and worries we do.
- d. MINISTRY Carl George said “the BEST ministry generally doesn’t occur during the group’s meetings so much as BETWEEN the meetings. Every chance you have to touch people between meetings helps them become EXCITED enough to want to come to the next meeting.”
- e. MULTIPLICATION According to a study by Joel Comiskey groups that meet outside of regular meeting multiply more often.
- f. WITNESSING It happens naturally when we do group life with the other people in our group. It takes place in our everyday life activities and challenges.
- g. COMMUNITY Real community, where no one is ever alone. Today people are desperate for a real taste of it.
- h. HEALTH A healthy group is a holistic one where evangelism, ministry, discipleship, communion and worship take place throughout the week.
- i. ACCOUNTABILITY The more time we spend together during the week the more we will get to know each other, and the more chances for other people to know my challenges, shortcomings, character flaws. This gives the group a greater opportunity to challenge and keep each one accountable
- j. PRIESTHOOD of all believers: Author Aubrey Malphurs points out that in most churches today in north America we see 10% of people doing 90% of the ministry of the church. Only during the week the group has a full opportunity to use each one’s spiritual gifts and be a blessing to others.
- k. ABUNDANCE The abundant life promised by Jesus to his followers (John 10.10) is only experienced when we learn to live it in community, with accountability, worship, ministry, mission, etc.
- l. Pastoral CARE Without any doubts the ten to twelve people in the group would be able to provide better pastoral care than to expect the pastor of the church to do it all by himself.
- m. HONORS God When people see Christians loving and living together in harmony while fulfilling their mission, they will praise God (Matthew 5.16).

**5. DANGERS of not having Group Life**

- a. Formality: another worship service or church program
- b. Unreal: no life, void, cold, wanting more
- c. Indifference: no real care of people and their needs
- d. Sickness: stagnant and then decline of group
- e. Shrinking: the group will diminish and most probably not multiply

**6. Biblical basis for living in community and having Group Life:**

- a. Read the following passages and consider the divine call to do life together
- b. GENESIS 2.18 It's not good to be alone: Eve was created to cut the loneliness of Adam, and bring love, and later the experience of community to his life.
- c. MATTHEW 22.37-39
  - i. Group life is a call to holiness – to love God
    - 1. Includes accountability
    - 2. Wesley's questions in his 'class meetings' (small groups) were all about accountability
  - ii. Group life is a call to social justice – to love neighbor
    - 1. Do something for those in your circle of influence
    - 2. Work on your extended circle of influence influencing them to bring them to Christ.
    - 3. Group life is the best place to fulfill the command to love our neighbor. Love can be seen here through concrete actions.

d. Acts 2.41-47; 4.32-37 What signs do you find of real group life and community?

- i. \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. \_\_\_\_\_
- iv. \_\_\_\_\_
- v. \_\_\_\_\_

e. John 13.35 What reasons do you find here for group life?

- i. \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. \_\_\_\_\_

f. Ecclesiastes 4.9-12 What reasons do you find here for group life?

- i. \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. \_\_\_\_\_

g. 1 Thessalonians 2.8 What reasons do you find here for group life?

- i. \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_

iii. \_\_\_\_\_

h. Romans 12.1-8                      Why is group life a need in Christ's body?

i. \_\_\_\_\_

ii. \_\_\_\_\_

iii. \_\_\_\_\_

i. God is calling Jesus followers to leave behind our culture's drive to individualism, self-centered living, and selfishness and learn to do real life!

## 7. Examples of group life in church HISTORY

a. NT small group / churches

i. As we have already seen, and according to Acts 2 and 4, early Christians practice real group life

ii. They not only met to sing songs, study the Bible and pray

iii. Instead, they met to share life and learned to support each other in life's challenges

b. Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760)

i. He took into his lands in Germany religious refugees from Moravia and Bohemia. A religious community was developed which became known as Herrnhut. This movement was called the Moravians.

ii. They had a strong small group structure and lived essentially a communal life, where "unity, holiness and intimate fellowship went hand in hand." They were a missional community and they believed this would be attractive to unbelievers.

iii. In these groups they exercised disciplinary actions when necessary, provided pastoral care, supplied for practical needs, and confronted in love. They became the biggest missionary force of the Protestant church to that date.

c. More could be said about many other movements that experienced different levels of community and mission. Among them the Valdensians, Anabaptists, and Quakers and Puritans.

## 8. TYPICAL small groups in our days

a. There are many different kinds of groups in our days. Scott Boren has written an excellent book on this topic titled *Missional Small Groups*. We will extract and analyze portions of it because of the clarity and the beauty in which they are presented.

b. According to Boren, all groups could be classified mainly in four categories according to their main purposes:

i. PERSONAL improvement groups

1. Example: "we get together because life is tough in this world and we need a few friends. It's not always convenient for us to meet every week, but we do meet when we can. Usually we



meet in short six- or seven-week periods or we meet a couple times a month. We get together, talk a bit about God or study the Bible, and share what is going on at work and in our family. I am not sure that we are close, but it is good to have a place where we can share a little about what is going on in our lives. Being in a small group has improved my life” (Boren, 2010, p. 39).

2. This group: is all about CONVENIENCE. It gives an opportunity to improve their lives. He attend if it is convenient, if he likes the leaders, the people who attend, the place, time, day, the material to study, etc.
3. This group is better than nothing, because people experience a little bit of love, and learn something about the Bible. But there are even better options.

### ii. LIFESTYLE adjustment groups

1. Example: “this group has become a priority to us. We have adjusted our schedules to meet together at least every other week, but usually we meet weekly. In our meetings, we either study the sermon preached by our pastor or use a Bible study guide that we all find personally beneficial. We truly enjoy each other’s presence, and we put a high priority on the group and the members in the group. We even do something social once each month. We rise to the occasion when someone has a need, and there is a sense that we are friends” (Boren, 2010, p. 40).
2. This group: is all about COMMITMENT to formal gatherings. Meetings are a priority; and people in the group are seen as friends. Group leaders know what to do, members know also their role and everyone does it well. The “group experience is simply laid on top of the typical American way of life”.
3. Most groups in North American are in this category. The way of life of people in groups is very similar to the life of those who don’t attend groups or even church.

### iii. RELATIONAL revision groups

1. Example: “Our group has a weekly meeting, but I am not sure that you would call it a *meeting* in a formal sense of the word. When we get together, it is the culmination of the rest of the week when we have been *in* one another’s lives. Yes, we do have a weekly lesson, but the leader usually only asks one or two questions from it.  
The most important part of our group, however, is not the meeting; it is how we are connected to the other six days. I have never been part of a group in which people are so willing to sacrifice time and energy for each other, and this

connectedness actually spills out into our neighborhood. It seems like we are always interacting with, praying for, and serving people who live near us. And in some ways, they are just as much part of our group as those of us who call ourselves *Christians*.

I'm not sure how I was able to do life before having this group. This might sound a bit utopian, but it is far from it. Sometimes it is hard. Recently we have had to wrestle with some relational conflict and hurt feelings. In the past I would have run away from such encounters, but not this time. It was not easy, but we pressed through. WE are still learning what it means to be God's family." (Boren, 2010, p. 41).

2. This group is: "intentionally learning to do life together differently" (p. 41). They are putting love where love is not (Saint John of the Cross). People are part of a COMMUNITY and they experience the presence of Christ in their group life. They help one another and supply for each other needs. They have become a family.

iv. MISSIONAL Re-creation groups

1. Example: "We have developed a way of connecting with each other and God that has resulted in some rather unpredictable developments. Two couples and a single person in our group live within walking distance of each other. So as a group we decide to adopt their neighborhood. We started with a block party. At first it was hard because no one knew us, but after the first party, we started becoming a presence in the community. Then one person started a summer children's Bible study, and as she got to know the neighbors and their needs, we began to pray. Now we have come around a single mom who has three kids, and we include her as much as we can in the life of the group. She has yet to fully understand who Jesus is, but we feel led to embrace her and the kids and see what God does in her life" (Boren, 2010, p. 43).
2. This group is: centered in its God given COMMISSION and works on it in one accord. They realize the group is not about meetings, Bible studies, but instead about reaching the community for Christ. These groups can take many different forms and work in different directions but they will all work to reach others!

- c. In order to further compare this four kind of groups, consider the following chart presented by Scott Boren in his book *Missiorelate*, page 40:

The Story	Improvement	Lifestyle Adjustment	Relational Revision	Missional Recreation
Lived Experience	Better Self	Surface-level Friendship	Contrast Society	Organic Mission
Focus	Me	Church	We	Neighborhood
Connection to Larger Church	Individual	Assimilation	Equipping	Creating & Involving
Cost	Easy in/ Easy Out	Meeting Attendance	Accountability	Radical Sacrifice
Goal	Connections	Close Back Door	Establish ways of Mission	Engagement with the Neighborhood
Discipleship	Event-centered	Curriculum Driven	Intentional Practices	Life-on-Life Mentoring
Evangelism	Invite to Church Events	Group Meeting	Relationships	In Neighborhood
Common Form of Groups	Short-term	Semester Groups Ongoing Groups	Groups Doing Practices	Organic Groups that take many forms

d. Summary

- |                                  |             |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| i. Personal improvement groups   | Convenience |
| ii. Lifestyle adjustment groups  | Commitment  |
| iii. Relational revision groups  | Community   |
| iv. Missional re-creation groups | Commission  |

**Exercise: (5 Minutes)**

- Ask the students to gather in groups of three and discuss the following questions:
  - Which one describes better the experience you have in your own group?
  - Why do you think is your group there?
  - What could you do to move your group into deeper and more meaningful levels?
- Conclude this exercise by asking:
  - Please raise your hands those of you who think your group is in the level of: how many in 'Personal improvement'? In 'Lifestyle Adjustment'? How many in 'Relational Revision'?, and in 'Missional Recreation'?
  - Give a positive conclusion leading students to see God's vision for our groups.

- e. Finally, Scott Boren concludes that “missional group life invites us to DIE to ourselves and to a group that is based on convenience and self-preservation” (p.56).
  - i. We must count the cost to live and experience such a kind of life.
  - ii. We need to repent from the idols of materialism and its hunger for having things, and be ready to begin a life lived by faith and completely different from our culture

**Exercise: (5 Minutes)**

- Ask the students to quickly write in their notebooks five barriers that they can think of, for people not having group life. Give them 2 minutes
- Ask them to share some of those out loud. Write them down in a blackboard and comment on them
- You can also add the following if they have not been mentioned already
  - Lack of love towards God and people
  - The high cost of group life
  - Individualism with its lone ranger approach: do it yourself (superman, the Lone ranger, Iron man, etc)
  - Self: self absorption, self centered living
  - The pursuit of the American dream. Robbing time and willingness to interact unless I gain something.
  - Superficial engagement with the world around us
  - Over commitment to activities and organizations
  - Friendships. New relationships need to grow, and in the process old friendships might diminish
  - Limited time available
  - Over use of technology
  - Entertainment. As is defined today
  - Wrong motivations for participating in a group: fun, socialize, look for girl or boy friend.
  - Unwillingness to: confront, ask for forgiveness, to forgive, or change.

**9. Common BARRIERS to Group Life:**

- a. Write your own:
  - i. ....
  - ii. ....
  - iii. ....
  - iv. ....
  - v. ....
- b. Consider also the following:
  - i. \_\_\_\_\_

- ii. \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. \_\_\_\_\_
- iv. \_\_\_\_\_
- v. \_\_\_\_\_
- vi. \_\_\_\_\_
- vii. \_\_\_\_\_
- viii. \_\_\_\_\_
- ix. \_\_\_\_\_
- x. \_\_\_\_\_

### 10. Defining ROLES for a meaningful group life

- a. God: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
  - i. Matthew 18.19      God will give what we ask for
  - ii. Matthew 18.20      Jesus will be there, always present
  - iii. John 16. 8          The Holy Spirit will convict of sin, righteousness and judgment
  
- b. BIBLE: defining the one another challenges
  - i. The Bible is the one that defines the way people should interact with one another.
  - ii. It will also point out the way to holy living and areas in which we need to grow and be transformed (Hebrews 4.12).
  - iii. All the verses that tell us about what to do for one another are to be taken as a clear indication of what kind of life Christ desires his children to live.
  - iv. When conflicts arise among group members, the Bible's plan for solving them should be followed (Matthew 18).
  
- c. GG MEETING:
  - i. It is a CATALYST for group life.
  - ii. It gives the opportunity to study the Word of God and discuss ways in which to apply it to our everyday living
  - iii. It provides a time for SHARING about life outside the meeting.
  - iv. It helps to CONNECT people who are unconnected in the rest of the group.
  - v. People don't need more meetings in their lives, instead they need meaningful RELATIONSHIPS. The GG meeting serves as an entry point for new people to get connected relationally.
  - vi. It provides a place to CELEBRATE what God is doing in the group.
  - vii. The GG meeting is not:
    - 1. the place where ALL the ministry happens
    - 2. the time when all the NEEDS are met
    - 3. the real group, it's only part of it

- d. WOMEN in GG (see Wesley's groups, Choi's groups)
  - i. Women have been equipped by God with a greater DRIVE for relationships. Naturally most women will be the ones fostering deeper relationships with other group members and visitors without being asked for. Men, on the other hand, generally need to learn how to develop and maintain deeper relationships.
  - ii. Furthermore, generally women are better communicators than men and can guide their groups into deeper times of sharing and participation.
  - iii. Women in the history of Small Groups:
    1. Women have always played an important role throughout history in the development and leadership of small groups.
    2. In the days of John Wesley when he turned England upside down with his powerful small group movement, the MAJORITY of the lay leaders of his groups were women. Wesley trained men and women to be the leaders of his groups called 'class meetings'.
    3. When David Paul Cho wanted to launch his groups in Korea, the men turn him down. Then he presented the plan to the women in church. They accepted it and successfully launched the new groups.
  - iv. Remember: Galatians 3.28 "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."
  - v. Be wise and involve the women of your group to help you develop your group life.
- e. YOUTH and children in GG
  - i. Children and youth are an integral part of the life of the group members so they shouldn't be excluded when the group meets for any group life activity.
  - ii. Instead of seeing children and youth as a liability, GG leaders should see them as our greatest ASSETS.
  - iii. Involve them in the organization, planning and execution of group life.
  - iv. Make sure you have activities that would be attractive to children and youth when you do a picnics, campouts, days at the beach, mission projects, etc.
  - v. Adults and youth will highly benefit in the interaction.
- f. VISITORS in group life
  - i. Visitors are not only welcomed to all group life activities but highly NEEDED.
  - ii. Try to involve as many visitors as possible in all your activities making sure the group is prepared to receive and relate with them.
  - iii. Constantly ask your group to invite their friends and bring them over!

- iv. Make sure you plan activities that are attractive to visitors while not losing your GG members
- v. Remember that Growth Groups exist for those who are not there yet.

g. CHURCH MEMBERS

- i. Everyone is welcome in group life especially church members.
- ii. Make sure you talk to your church members about WHY we do groups and our goal of reaching unbelievers for Christ.
- iii. Ask your church members to be careful with the topics they talk especially when visitors are present. Also with the Adventist LINGO which may completely lose visitors.
- iv. Criticizing leaders, pastors, elders, church programs or ministries should never be allowed. Concentrate on what edifies the body of Christ.
- v. Make sure you invite church leaders (elders, pastors, etc.) to often participate in your group life. It's good for people to see them sharing normal life activities.

h. LEADERS

- i. Three basic functions:
  - 1. MODEL group life: do it yourself. Drink your own medicine. Your group will not do it and think it is important if they don't see you doing it.
  - 2. TEACH group life:
    - a. Describe to your group what it means to have group life, how it is different from the group meeting, the advantages, who did it throughout history, etc.
    - b. Take time with your group to read the 'one another' passages in scriptures and to discuss how they could be practiced.
    - c. Use every opportunity to talk and teach about group life. Example: during the group meeting mention that you went to the gym with two other guys and you had a great time getting to know each other more while doing exercise.
    - d. Teach your people how to care for themselves and help one another.
    - e. Teach about the priesthood of all believers and how group life gives the opportunity to use our gifts in serving others.
    - f. Give ideas on what to do in very practical terms
  - 3. FOSTER group life:
    - a. Organize different activities where the whole group can experience and taste group life

- b. Ask the church members of your group to invite the visitors for lunch, dinner or brunch in the following week. Plan it carefully so no one is left without an invitation
  - c. Plan a monthly night out for the guys and another for the gals.
  - d. Constantly suggest ideas and invite people of the group to do life as a group.
  - e. Take members with you when you do prayer visits and encourage them to care for others
  - f. Make sure that you and your co-leader plan at least a couple activities a month where the group can do group life.
  - g. Be creative, be purposeful and learn to enjoy group life.
- ii. PASTORAL care in GG life
  1. Normally churches EXPECT the pastor to do all the pastoral care. This can include:
    - a. giving Bible studies,
    - b. counseling hurting couples,
    - c. visiting the sick at home or hospitals,
    - d. praying for the sick and discouraged,
    - e. finding and bringing back the lost sheep,
    - f. doing follow up on visitors, etc
  2. All these functions will take place NATURALLY in a group that has real group life
  3. Teach and facilitate pastoral care among your group members
    - a. Pray that they will care for each other.
    - b. Show people how to care for one another
    - c. Take group members with you on prayer visits
    - d. Encourage them to call and care for each other

### Explain: (3 Minutes)

- Tell students that there are many great ideas and practices to foster Group Live and that in session # 6 – Organize, this will be discussed further.
- But today you will share with them one of the best ways to foster Group Life, Home prayer visits

## 11. Home PRAYER visits

- a. One of the best ways to cultivate healthy relationships and care for the people in your group is to do home prayer visits.



- b. WHY should we visit? Because...
  - i. People have challenges, difficult times, lose hope, get discouraged, depressed, are under pressure, lose faith, get lost, fall in sin, need to be confronted, etc.
  - ii. People need to be prayed for
  - iii. They need to know they are loved
  - iv. We discover new needs and ways in which to minister to them
  - v. We find new names of people who we can work for
  - vi. Because we are family!
- c. What's the PURPOSE and goal of the home prayer visit?
  - i. The goal is to inspire, encourage, strengthen
  - ii. Show love and care
  - iii. Build relationships
  - iv. Pray for people
- d. WHO should be visited?
  - i. Those in pain or need: those hurting, weak, the discouraged, the mourning, who have stopped coming,
  - ii. Those with joy: a new baby, job, house, just married, etc.
  - iii. Visitors: trying to listen and supply to their needs, show love and compassion
  - iv. Members: to encourage, challenge, care.
  - v. Leaders: leaders are very human and because of it they have many challenges. Visit them, pray for them, and show them love.
- e. Who should GO on a visit?
  - i. Leaders of the group
  - ii. Members of the group
  - iii. Never go alone, always take someone else with you. When you do it you will be developing others to do pastoral care.
  - iv. Be careful with gender issues when choosing who visits who, and who goes along with them
  - v. Be very careful if you need to take children along with you
- f. WHEN?
  - i. Only at an ARRANGED time.
  - ii. Choose a night to visit members and visitors' homes.
  - iii. Be sensitive to their schedule, and accommodate yourself to them

g. ATTITUDE:

- i. Arrive with a PRAYERFUL attitude.
- ii. Show you care and love them
- iii. Be there 100% mentally.
- iv. Don't answer or check your phone!
- v. Be ready to practice active listening.

h. What should we do?

i. You can SHARE

1. How happy you are for the opportunity to be there with them
2. How much the group appreciates them
3. If there is some challenge or difficulty that you know, you can show concern: you may say "I'm really sad" or worried because I heard that you just lost your job, were robbed, lost a loved one, etc.

ii. You can ASK:

1. How are you and your family doing?
2. Do you have any specific needs we can pray for?
3. Do you have any friends or family members who need the Lord that we can pray for?

iii. You can READ:

1. Share a relevant Scripture.
2. Be careful not to give a full sermon
3. Highlight only the main point and how it applies to their lives

iv. You can PRAY:

1. Focus your prayers on BLESSING the members and their homes.
2. For the needs they have mentioned
3. For their family and friends who don't know Jesus
4. If they have children always pray for them
5. Invite everyone present at the house to come and pray
6. Don't make your prayers too long especially if there are children and visitors present

i. HOW LONG should the visit last?

- i. Stay all that is needed but don't wait until they ask you to leave
- ii. Be sensitive and wise about the time for dinner, putting kids to sleep, etc.
- iii. As a general rule, stay no longer than 30 to 45 minutes.
- iv. Be careful with accepting food to eat while visiting. That could take really long and get you into talking about other topics that may not edify. If they insist that you eat with them, you can schedule a future time when you can do that.

- v. Leave the house as soon as you end your final prayer. Resist the temptation of talking about anything else.
- vi. Remember to ask the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom to know how long to stay
  
- j. Remember:
  - i. You are there with a clear purpose
  - ii. God has promised to be there with you
  - iii. Make sure you use your ears more than your mouth
  - iv. You are God's ambassador to that home that night
  - v. Leave in the home the impression that today we have been visited by a man or woman of God.

### 12. Group life stages

- a. Every group grows and as it does it goes through different stages like a child does.
- b. There are mainly four. We will only mention them now in order to have a general idea:
  - i. **FORMING Stage** – up to 2 months
  - ii. **STORMING/NORMING Stage** – up to 3 months
  - iii. **PERFORMING Stage** – up to 4 months
  - iv. **REFORMING Stage** – up to 3 months
- c. In each one of these stages there will be different aspects in which the leader must concentrate and work on with his group.
- d. Since the topic of Group Life is so crucial we will study it further along with the stages and the specific ideas for each one in session # 6 – Organize.

### 13. Remember

- a. Group life is about living life together as the family of God
- b. Group life has the purpose in reaching others for the kingdom of God
- c. Do life, give life, enjoy life together!

### 14. Recommended reading:

- a. Boren, M. S. (2010). *Missional small groups: Becoming a community that makes a difference in the world*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- b. Boren, M. S. (2011). *Missiorelate*. Houston, TX: TOUCH Publications.
- c. Earley, D. (2001). *The 8 habits of effective small group leaders*. Houston, TX: Cell Group Resources.

**Question and Answers: (5 Minutes)**

- Give time for students to ask questions and provide simple answers.
- Remind everyone that instructors will be available after the session if they have further questions or comments

**Review the Practicum: (5 Minutes)**

- Explain once again what the practicum is and how it will help them have a practical experience that goes beyond theory
- Mention what they need to turn in today as it was explained in the previous session
- Emphasize what they need to do for next week's meeting.

**Remind of next week's meeting (2 minutes)**

- Remind people at what time the next training will begin and ask them to be on time!
- Remind of the place of the next training.
- Remind also the materials they need to bring to class

**Vision Sharing (3 minutes)**

- Share the Vision: we are here because we want each person not to be lost but to be in heaven. We want to help each one reach their circle of influence for Christ. We want to have a missional lifestyle that honors and pleases God

**Prayer**

- End the training with prayer.

# GG Leadership Development Program

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## **Session # 5 – Lead a GG Meeting (to DO)**

### ***Objective of session # 5:***

1. Guide students to comprehend what is a holistic GG meeting.
2. Help each student to become GG leaders who facilitate through appropriate questions and interaction.
3. Challenge students to go beyond information and aim for total transformation of people's lives.

### ***Materials needed for this session:***

1. Bible, GG student manual, white board and markers, pencils and papers.
2. Computer, projector and PPT

***Suggested time for this session:*** 90 minutes

### ***Optional additional reading materials for the instructor:***

1. Comiskey, J. (2001). *How to lead a great cell group meeting so people want to come back*. Houston, TX: Cell Group Resources.
2. McBride, N. F. (1997). *How to have great small group meetings: Dozens of ideas you can use right now*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.

### ***Today's program: Session # 5***

1. Welcome and prayer
2. Thanksgiving:
  - Thank each one for making a being on time and for making this training a priority.
3. Today's session program: Briefly explain today's program
  - Introduction exercises (Welcome, song [optional], prayer, etc)
  - Study of session (fill in the blanks, exercises, discussion in groups, etc)
  - Question and answers
  - Practicum's follow up: Homework!
  - Prayer
4. Introductory exercise
5. Study of Session # 5
6. Time for questions and answers
7. Practicum's follow up: Homework!
8. Vision sharing
9. Prayer

**Session # 5 – Lead a GG Meeting (to DO)*****Introductory exercise: (7 minutes)***

1. If the total number of students is less than 15 then have the whole group form a circle (you can have it ready before they come). If the group is bigger select 12 students to form this case study group.
2. You will lead the group exemplifying many of the wrong things for a GG leader to do. So prepare in advance and plan your mistakes as a leader!
3. Examples of mistakes to exemplify: ask close questions, exam questions and answering to them ‘wrong answer, next one?’, stratosphere questions, etc. Don’t look at people in the eye, look at the floor, or after you ask your question and while someone is answering ask a quick question to the person right next to you, etc. After asking a question and almost not giving time to answer reprimand them for not participating, and tell them if things go like this I don’t know where our group will go, I will have to talk to the pastor about those who don’t participate....!
4. You can prepare all this with another GG leader or GG instructor. In this case one can interrupt the other, or correct them in front of all the others. You can almost have little argument...
5. Try to make it bad, almost disrespectful, but be careful not to hurt anyone! It can be humorous too! Do it for 5 minutes. Be creative!
6. Then ask: is this all a group meeting can be? How did you feel about it? Honestly, would you come back?
7. Clarify:
  - The point of this was simply to show you what SHOULDN’T be done! There is a better way of having a group!
  - If I hurt someone, please forgive me, I was only playing being a bad leader!

***Transition (you may say):*** Friends, there is another way of leading a GG meeting. What you just saw is NOT what you want to do! Let’s begin by reading Matthew 18.20 our key passage...

**1. Key Passage: MATTHEW 18.20****2. A very special time**

- a. The Growth Group meeting is only ONE PART of the life of the group, but it’s a crucial one for a HEALTHY group.
- b. Jesus met with different kinds of groups with different purposes. With the twelve disciples he met and prayed, ate, taught, and even shared his concerns.
- c. It’s crucial for a healthy GG to regularly meet physically (preferably once a week). This will give people a sense of IDENTITY and BELONGING for which we all crave.
- d. But not any kind of meeting will fulfill God’s intended purposes. For that, reason is fundamental to have a clear image of the meetings’ goals, structure, role of key people and details.

### 3. Goals of a GG meeting

- a. Importance of defining a objectives for each meeting: “objectives identify what you want to accomplish by the time the meeting is finished. Unfortunately, objectives are too often assumed or even overlooked” (Mc Bride, 1997).
- b. It’s always better to have written objectives for each meeting. All our dialogue agendas begin with the intended objective of that day.
- c. When writing your objectives, think about what do you want your group members to:
  - i. KNOW (cognitive): knowledge, facts, opinions, data, understanding and insights
  - ii. FEEL (affective): attitudes, emotions, opinions, sentiments, and desires
  - iii. DO (psychomotor): actions, behavior, conduct, performance, activity and presentation (Mc Bride, 1997).
- d. And remember to use words that are precise and action oriented; that describe the members of the group actions or attitudes; and make them short and to the point.
- e. What are our GG meeting general goals?
  - i. EVANGELISM is the first goal. In GG we want to help people win their families, friends, and acquaintances to Christ. We call this their circle of influence, or oikos. “The most dangerous cell leader is one who has so concentrate on the people inside the cell that the unreached world is forgotten.” *Cell Leader Intern Guidebook*.
  - ii. TRANSFORMATION and not information is the second goal. Bill Easum says: “the primary goal of every small group is to produce CHANGED lives.” This is reflected in the name of our groups with the word Growth! Transformation, change, discipleship, maturity and sanctification are key goals. A God honoring lifestyle begins by understanding and applying Biblical Principles to everyday life challenges. This is true discipleship and worship.
  - iii. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT is the third goal. Is the principle behind 2 Timothy 2.2. Teaching to people who will be capable of teaching and developing others who will do the same.
  - iv. COMMUNITY is the fourth goal. People need to belong and in a Christian fellowship environment, growth takes place in a better way.
  - v. MINISTRY is the last general goal. In our GG meetings we want people to have the opportunity to practice the biblical doctrine of the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2.9).

**4. Who is coming tonight to our GG meeting?**

- a. JESUS will be there! Matthew 18.20
  - i. Please remember that the person most interested to be there is Jesus himself. He will manifest himself many times in different ways but his presence will be certainly felt.
  - ii. Expect His Holy Spirit to be present also, touching hearts, leading the discussion and convicting people of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16.8).
- b. BELIEVERS will be there. Matthew 18.20
- c. UNBELIEVERS will be invited by their friends and some will actually come.
  - i. What will be the unbelievers' EXPECTATIONS as they come to the GG meeting?
    1. What's in it for me?
    2. Do I fit in this group?
    3. Do I really want to be here and do this?
    4. What will this cost me?
  - ii. Make sure to remind your GG people to invite and give rides to their unbelieving relationships.

**5. The structure of a GG meeting**

- a. Every small group that has existed in history has followed some kind of structure.
- b. Stephen P. Greggo mentions that "Wesley's specific meeting plan for bands detailed six procedures:
  - i. Meet weekly,
  - ii. Begin on time,
  - iii. Start with prayer or singing,
  - iv. Take turns honestly speaking about one's own spiritual condition,
  - v. End with prayer that benefits each participant and
  - vi. Examine one another regularly using a routines set of probing questions" (*Trekking toward wholeness: A resource for care group leaders*, 63).
- c. Each one of our GG meetings follows a simple structure called the 5 Ws. Each part has a specific objective and a process for it:
 

<b>W</b> elcome	<u>COMMUNION</u>	Me to you
<b>W</b> orship	<u>WORSHIP</u>	Us to God
<b>W</b> ord	<u>DISCIPLESHIP</u>	God to us
<b>W</b> orks	<u>MINISTRY/EVANGELISM</u>	God through us
<b>W</b> asting	<u>COMMUNION</u>	God in us

  - i. In the following pages we will analyze each one of them more in depth:
- d. **Welcome** – Building the RELATIONSHIP (15 minutes)
  - i. Ask people to find a sit and get ready for another GG meeting.



- ii. Always begin with a joyful attitude making sure you include a special welcome to the guests that are present.
  - iii. We have found in our GGs that a good way to start the meeting is with an icebreaker question that invites people to talk about themselves (their lives, hobbies, and things they enjoy doing) and serves as an introduction or bridge to the topic that will be discussed later that day. Example: what was the most exciting trip you took as a child? Who is the person that you trust the least and why?
  - iv. Remember that you can WELCOME Jesus to the meeting. After all, He said He was going to be present! Bill Beckham suggest the use of phrases such as:
    1. Jesus said: "where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."
    2. We are here to experience the presence, power, companionship and purpose of Christ.
    3. Jesus promised he would be with this group.
    4. We believe his promise, acknowledge his presence, and welcome Christ here with us.
  - v. Evaluate the Welcome part by asking yourself: At the end of the icebreaker
    1. Are members of the group more open with others?
    2. Are they relaxed and ready to share and grow together?
- e. **Worship** – *Entering into God's PRESENCE* (15 minutes)
- i. The goal of this second section is to help members enter into the presence of God and give Him total control of this meeting and their lives.
  - ii. The worship section is much more than singing.
  - iii. Keep members focused and avoid distractions.
  - iv. Use the Bible to introduce worship time by reading a Psalm, or in between songs. Resist the temptation to comment on the verses!
  - v. When singing, make sure everyone has the lyrics of the songs planned to sing Remember to practice in advance all the songs the group will sing.
  - vi. Begin with upbeat songs and close with a song that would bring people into a more calm or reflection time
  - vii. If the group doesn't have musicians to play live music, make use of an Ipod, MP3, Youtube videos or DVD players to accompany the singing (use playbacks if you feel brave!).
  - viii. THANKSGIVING time: It's a crucial part during the worship time. It is an opportunity to give thanks to God for the things He has done during the last week. This is a great occasion to show guests what God has been doing, that He is real, hears, cares, and responds when we ask Him.
  - ix. Remember to be: prepared, sensitive, authentic, passionate, Biblical, positive, practical, confident.

- x. End this section in prayer in groups where people can express their only their thanksgiving (there will be time for petitions at the end of the GG meeting).
  - xi. Evaluate by asking yourself: at the end of worship time, is the group more focused in God and ready to be ministered by Him?
- f. **Word – APPLYING the word of God to our lives (30 minutes)**
- i. This is the time where God speaks to the group through the Bible.
  - ii. As many cell churches around the world have discovered there are great advantages of having the topic of the group discussion connected or based on the sermon preached.
    - 1. Steve Cordle presents several ADVANTAGES of using sermon based dialogues:
      - a. “There is no teaching pressure place on the group leader.
      - b. Using sermon-based questions promotes worship attendance
      - c. Each lesson is self-contained
      - d. The lessons are application-oriented”
    - 2. In our own GGs, the pastor provides the discussion for the study. Don’t study the sermon, study the Word of God.
  - iii. Begin the dialogue by reading the whole passage that will be studied and then when the questions are asked lead people to find the answer in the Bible. Share the reading with people present: ask each person to read one verse, keep going around until you read the whole passage.
  - iv. The leader needs to study and adapt the questions to the specific needs and situation of his group
  - v. The purpose of the Word time is not share information but to challenge for transformation
  - vi. There is no preaching in the Word time, but inductive learning of biblical Principles.
  - vii. Keep eye contact with people while they are talking
  - viii. Try to involve all people present in the discussion, even those more shy.
  - ix. Use open questions following the OIA pattern: Observation, Interpretation, Application.
  - x. Ask members to summarize the key points or to even to put it into one sentence.
  - xi. In our GG we always have towards the end application questions where people are invited to see how they can apply the topic studied.
  - xii. Many GG also conclude asking the question: “What did God tell you tonight?” You will be amazed the responses you will get, from what the Holy Spirit said to people.
  - xiii. Be aware of the timing. Don’t go over the 30 minutes! It’s better that people leave wanting more than overwhelmed or fed up!
  - xiv. Evaluate by asking yourself: did members share openly? Did the group learn to walk more obediently to Christ this week?

- g. **Works – REACHING others (15 minutes)**
  - i. The goal of this section is how we can reach others who don't love/obey Jesus.
  - ii. This is love in action. We should actually do something during the week
  - iii. People can be invited to take Bible Studies and be discipled
  - iv. Examples:
    - 1. Prepare cards for people who are facing challenges.
    - 2. Coordinate visits to hospitals, orphanages, geriatrics, homeless, etc.
    - 3. Pray for the non-Christian friends
    - 4. Prepare and run an outreach project. Like giving out water bottles in an intersection, giving out gum at a park, cleaning windshields for free, etc.
    - 5. Plan and pray for the future multiplication of the group
    - 6. Coordinate a Matthew party
    - 7. Review and pray for all those in the "Blessing List"
    - 8. See who didn't come today and find out what can we do for them
    - 9. Bring awareness of church wide events
    - 10. For more ideas see the book "Bridges 101" by Ruthie Jacobsen
  - v. If this part has been omitted a couple of times, move the works portion to before the Word time for several weeks in a row!
  - vi. This section is not optional, it's crucial for the group to be alive, reaching others, and prepare for multiplication.
  - vii. Remind the VISION:
    - 1. Make sure you take time to passionately share the vision of our GGs, of multiplication and reaching others for Christ.
    - 2. Be creative in sharing the vision:
      - a. Tell stories or news: you can tell stories of other groups, how they are multiplying, how they are reaching non-believers;
      - b. Ask questions: you can ask what people think is our goal, or say something like "why are we here tonight?"
      - c. Show pictures of other groups
      - d. Show maps of areas of our city where there is no groups
      - e. Do a video interview with your pastor asking him what is the vision and goal for our Growth Groups and show it to your GG
      - f. Ask the coach of your GG to give a report of how many people attend our GGs, what are the challenges, and what to pray for
  - viii. In our GG we usually close this section with a time of prayer where we ask people what are their needs, worries, or challenges. Pray in groups and invite prayer partners to continue praying during the week.

- ix. Evaluate by asking yourself: Is Jesus working through us to reach others?
- h. **Wasting Time – *LIVING with God* ( \_\_\_? minutes)**
  - i. This portion is also called “refreshment time” and some of our groups even call it “Wild time”. This is a time to share some light finger food, juices or fruits.
  - ii. People usually are standing around the table and conversations flow freely.
  - iii. Make sure to involve all visitors and find out what they are passionate about, their challenges, dreams, etc.
  - iv. This time is precious for GG leaders for getting to know people and building relationships.
  - v. Avoid transforming this time into a formal supper where different dishes are served! If you need to use forks and spoons, it’s probably too much!
  - vi. It healthy to ask different group members to bring refreshments. Make sure it never becomes a burden, make it a joy gift.
  - vii. Make sure people don’t stay too long for the host to feel uncomfortable.
  - viii. GG leader help to clean up and put things back in order after the GG meeting.
- i. Review examples of planned meetings: Appendix 5E – Dialogue Examples
- j. Remember:
  - i. Were people EDIFIED?
    - 1. 1 CORINTHIANS 14.26 What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. NAU
    - 2. The growth and edification of the GG must be a priority
    - 3. The meeting was successful not if the 5W’s were followed, but if the group was edified.
  - ii. FOCUS on Christ
    - 1. The focus at all times must be Jesus. He is the one that keeps meetings balanced
    - 2. Remember that the 5W’s are not laws to follow, but guidelines to concentrate on Jesus, foster participation and growth.
- k. How to evaluate your meeting?
  - i. Were people edified? Was Christ glorified?
  - ii. Were we the family of God on earth?
  - iii. Are people being transformed through our meetings?

- iv. Weekly report: In our GG we have a Weekly Report and Evaluation sheet that helps the GG leaders evaluate each part of the program. See Appendix 5C.

#### 6. Role of the BIBLE in the GG Meeting

- a. Isaiah 55:11 “so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me EMPTY, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”
- b. The Bible must be opened and read at every GG meeting.
- c. It’s important that the leader is prepared in advance having enough Bibles for each person that will come to the meeting.
- d. In today’s technological world many will have the Bible in their phones, but make sure you as a GG leader read from the book, flipping the pages, and pointing to it with your finger. This serves as a visual aid to people.
- e. Remind people in your group that there is power in reading God’s word!
- f. The GG leader needs to teach people how to extract Biblical principles from what it’s being studied and challenge people to apply it
- g. The meeting is not a Bible study, but make sure, we do study the Bible and not only give our own opinions on the subject.
- h. Let God speak to people through His Word.
- i. In our GGs we encourage the group to MEMORIZE one verse a week. Can you imagine what could happen if people would actually do it? Give the example as a leader!
- j. What are some of the benefits people can experience by reading the Bible and applying them to their lives? 1 Timothy 3.15-17
  - i. \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. \_\_\_\_\_
  - iii. \_\_\_\_\_
  - iv. \_\_\_\_\_
  - v. \_\_\_\_\_
- k. Guideliness for STUDYING the Bible during Word time
  - i. Roberta Hestenes suggests the following ideas:
    - 1. Each person should have his or her own Bible or copy of the text
    - 2. Usually each study should begin with a reading of the selected portion of Scripture
    - 3. Use silence creatively
    - 4. Involve as many of the senses as possible
    - 5. Stay in one passage: do not jump around, stay focus on one section of Scripture at a time. It can become superficial if you move too fast.
    - 6. Avoid boring Bible studies through variety.

## 7. The leader's role in the meeting

- a. "The role of the small group leaders is to LEAD the people to a CLOSER RELATIONSHIP with Christ by opening their homes and loving the people God has sent to them. Their goal is to CHANGE lives." Easum, W.M. (2007)
- b. Fosters RECONCILIATION between God and His fallen creatures. 2 Corinthians 5.18-20
- c. FACILITATES the meeting
  - i. Facilitation in the growth group helps the members to flex their spiritual muscles, apply God's Word to their everyday lives, and aids them in ministering to others.
  - ii. Leaders function better when...
    1. They're sensitive to the dynamics of the group
    2. They lead the discussion
    3. Stimulate participation from all members
    4. They make sure not to dominate the group, but instead aid in the natural discourse in the group
  - iii. A facilitator does not PREACH or TEACH a class
    1. If your calling is preaching, please find another place to put that gift in practice.
    2. The purpose of the group is to apply Biblical knowledge to the member's daily lives.
    3. How much should the GG leader talk?
      - a. Follow the 70/30 principle. 70% the group, 30% the leader.
      - b. Learn to listen! This can be especially difficult for extroverts.
  - iv. A facilitator GUIDES others
    1. Definition: Facilitate—to make simple
    2. Synonyms: Help, alleviate, make simple, guide, authorize, lubricate, make possible, leveling the process.
    3. A good question the leader can ask is, "What do all of you think?" The leader will then summarize the answer of the members.
    4. A facilitator is neither stiff nor passive.
    5. The facilitator interacts with the other members.
    6. Please resist the temptation to make a comment after every other comment made.
  - v. Facilitators learn while they LEAD
    1. People always learn better when they're practicing what they're learning
    2. You will never have "enough" understanding of the Bible
    3. You don't need to answer every question, and you don't need to know it all
  - vi. Two qualities that are essential to be a good facilitator
    1. *A sincere love for GOD* - Mark 12:30
    2. *A sincere love for OTHERS* - Mark 12:31

vii. Remember...

1. Study the Scriptures fervently to better facilitate the discussion
2. Facilitates others to give them the opportunity to apply the Scriptures to their own lives
3. Refrains from making the group just another church program
4. Make questions that encourage members to search the Bible
5. Have an ear that is quick to listen and a loving heart quick to respond with love

d. Leads through great **QUESTIONS**

- i. Often the difference between an effective discussion and a cold, fruitless one is the types of questions being asked.
- ii. Preparing the right types of questions prior to the group will help the leader to be assured he will have an extremely lively group.
- iii. **ADVANTAGES** of using questions:
  1. It's a more postmodern approach to learning
  2. The leader stops being the center of attention
  3. Promotes interaction
  4. Everyone can answer the question, at least it in their minds
  5. It's almost impossible not to think about it
  6. Promotes self discovery,
  7. People feel they are learning and helping others to learn
  8. Teaches people the almost lost art of **THINKING!**
- iv. There are two basic types of questions:
  1. **CLOSED**: there is only one correct response.
  2. **OPEN**: There is always more than one answer, and they generate usually good discussions. It helps the members apply the group's teachings to their lives.
- v. What to **AVOID**
  1. Questions you should never ask: Machine gun, over your head, what did you say, exam, ozone question
  2. Lots and lots of text at any point
  3. Being asked to read too many verses, even in different books of the Bible, before you can answer one question
  4. Too much attention to self-disclosure, community-building or personal opinions and not enough time to look at the Bible.
- vi. You should utilize the following types of questions (OIA):
  1. **OBSERVATION**: primarily facts, generally found in the text
  2. **INTERPRETATION**: Knowledge-based, they reach the mind, but not the heart

3. **APPLICATION**: impact the everyday life, the personal life, they reach the heart and affect people's actions.

vii. Questions worth **REPEATING**:

1. What stands out to you in this passage?
2. What seems to be the main point of this passage?
3. Can you illustrate this truth with a story from your life?
4. What is God telling you right now?

**Exercise: (5 Minutes)**

- Ask the students to individually prepare 3 open questions from John 3:16. Give them 3 minutes for this section.
- Ask some of them to share those questions and comment on them if they are open or close and how good to lead a discussion.
- Conclude this exercise by asking:
  - You will have the opportunity to practice this more when you prepare your own dialogue.

viii. How to answer **TOUGH** and **DOCTRINAL** questions:

1. Admit that you don't have all the answers
2. Acknowledge that you might, at some point, give unwillingly a partial or wrong answer.
3. Humbly say: "I don't know the answer, but I will do my best to find it for next week"
4. Resist the temptation and trap of giving an answer when you don't know!
5. Don't be scared, this are actually great opportunities and the Holy Spirit will use it for each one's spiritual growth
6. Affirm that that is a good question
7. Mention that you need to give first some background in order to respond that question.
8. Offer to study that topic after the meeting is over or at another convenient time.
9. Never give the impression you don't care, or don't want to respond
10. Take time and research yourself and then take the results to the group

ix. Remember:

1. Do not let people leave the group without having applied the Bible to their own lives.
2. The goal of the growth group is to **TRANSFORM** lives, not simply impart knowledge.



3. It's good to go over the things we agree to do as a group, to see if people are applying what they're learning.
4. Do not **ANSWER** your own questions! Don't fear silence, give people time to respond.
- x. Provide along with the question the verse to which you are referring, or where they can find the answer.
- xi. You can start the study by giving a general overview of the topic or passage.
- xii. It's better to start applying each question as we go along rather than to wait until the end of the topic.
- xiii. Don't have too many discussion questions. Seven to ten should suffice.
- xiv. Don't feel obligated to go through all the questions that were in the dialogue or even the ones you've prepared.
- xv. Make sure that people leave hungry for more discussion.
- xvi. Resist the temptation to give homework to those who are new or visitors.
- xvii. See Appendix 5B for examples of questions for different times
- xviii. Homework: Practice it!
  1. Prepare an entire meeting Dialogue covering the 5W's based on:  
1 THESSALONIANS 4.13-18
  2. With the assigned text make 7 discussion/open questions and 2 closed. Make sure you have observation, interpretation, and applications questions.
  3. Share and analyze your questions with your accountability partner.
  4. Bring your questions to the next training and be ready to turn them in for review.

**Explain: (5 Minutes)**

- Make sure you take enough time to explain how to do the homework of preparing an entire Dialogue.
- Guide them to Appendix 5F - Meeting & Dialogue Planner, and show them how to practically do it
- If you haven't done it before, pair them so they can work first alone, and then review with their partner before they turn it in
- Make sure you put a deadline for this homework

**e. Leads in PRAYER**

- i. Why do we pray in our GG meetings?

1. To ask God to be present with us
2. To experience God's power
3. To give us direction and protection
4. Because the kingdom of God advances only through prayer
5. Because we don't forget that he has done in the past
6. Because having a group meeting is entering into a spiritual battle
7. Because it fills the heart, mind and soul with God's purposes and opens our minds to discern His voice more clearly

ii. **What to pray for in SG**

- i. INTERCESSORY can be described as the act of requesting God to do something in someone's live.
- ii. Milton Adams says "sometimes we don't know how to pray for our friends and family (or even those who have hurt us), yet we know we should. Paul gave us a pattern of prayer in Colossians 1:9-14 to follow when we pray for others. Read this passage and try using it as a pattern the next time you pray. Watch how God answers."
- iii. Again Milton Adams suggests that we pray that (Growth Groups, Executive Summary):
  1. They will understand God's will.
  2. They gain spiritual wisdom.
  3. They live a life pleasing and honoring to God.
  4. They do kind things for others.
  5. They know God better and better.
  6. They are filled with God's strength.
  7. They endure in patience.
  8. They stay full of Christ's joy.
  9. They always be thankful.
  10. They recall God's forgiveness of their sins.

f. **Remember the DETAILS!** (indebted to Joel Comiskey materials)

- i. Details might not seem very important at first, but they can certainly DISTRACT people's attention from the eternal realities.
- ii. In the Bible God is presented as paying great attention to details. While instructing Moses about the sanctuary God gave a very detailed description on how to build every piece of furniture, where they were to be placed, and even who and how they should handle them.
- iii. Consider the following elements as you plan your meeting:
  1. ATMOSPHERE of the home: Be careful and do something about the aromas of pets, diapers, garbage, and even heavy perfumes.

2. TEMPERATURE: if it's too hot people will tend to fall asleep, if it's too cold, someone will get sick! Be aware of your people's reactions.
3. SEATING arrangement:
  - a. Have seat arranged so all can see each other. A circle is the best. No one should be sitting behind another.
  - b. The leader should be at the same level as participants.
  - c. If the room is big, make a smaller circle or you are risking killing the discussion time and closeness.
4. LIGHTING:
  - a. Make sure there is enough light to be able to read, but not too much so it feels cozy.
  - b. A candle may not add a lot of light but is a powerful message and can remind people of God's presence through the Holy Spirit.
5. MATERIALS: Make sure you have enough Bibles, pencils, song sheets, and sticky notes for everyone!
6. CHILDREN
  - a. Children are not a detail, but usually youth groups don't have many children present.
  - b. If you happen to have some children in your group, prepare activities for them assigning one or two person to help out with them in a separate room of the house. Adults can rotate in doing this.
  - c. Children should stay with the adults for Welcome and Worship, and separate for Word and Works.
  - d. Remember you can also begin a children group!
7. DISTRACTIONS:
  - a. Ask everyone to turn off or to vibrate their cell phones. Texting can be also very disturbing. Talk about these things and come to agreement. Ex: one of our early teens GG asked all people as they walked in to leave their phones in a basket!
  - b. Turn off TV, radios, computers and video games. No exceptions.
  - c. Children crying? be prepared ahead of time.
8. TIMING:
  - a. Arrive EARLY. The leader should be there 20 minutes before the appointed time. Make sure chairs are in place, help host in preparing everything, have refreshments ready, pray with host and people who will be leading.
  - b. Begin ALWAYS on time. It's frustrating to have to always wait for the same people. Give 5 minutes and begin. Agree on expectations: when to begin and end, and

how long to wait. Remember that if you begin late, people will show up even later.

- c. END on time. Formally close the meeting with a prayer, so people know they can leave if they need to.
- g. Make sure you practice all you have learned. Ask your GG leader to help him in these areas: Leading the 5Ws, facilitating, making questions, details, weekly Report and Evaluation.

### Explain: (5 Minutes)

- Ask the students to go now to the Appendix material of this session.
- Explain the value of each material.
- Explain what you expect them to do with it.

### 8. Appendix review:

- a. Appendix 5A: How to read and study the Bible passage
- b. Appendix 5B: Questions for different times
- c. Appendix 5C: GG Covenant and Ground Rules
- d. Appendix 5D: GG Weekly Report and Evaluation
- e. Appendix 5E: GG Dialogues Examples
- f. Appendix 5F: GG Dialogue planner

### 9. Recommended books on leading meetings:

- a. Comiskey, Joel. *How to Lead a Great Cell Group Meeting So People Want to Come Back*. Houston, Tex.: Cell Group Resources, 2001,
- b. McBride, Neal. *How to Have Great Small Group Meetings : Dozens of Ideas You Can Use Right Now*. Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress, 1997. p28.

## **Appendix 5A - How to read and study the Bible passage**

From: Hestenes, R. (1984). *Using the Bible in groups* (1st American ed.). Philadelphia: Westminster Press. 49, 50.

### **1. Introducing the text**

- Silent reading of the text by all
- Oral reading of the text by all
- Group oral reading of the text in unison or antiphonally (alternating verses and readers)
- A role-playing or dramatization of the text
- Copying the text
- Hearing or singing a song, hymn or oratorio which uses the text
- Reciting a text which has been previously memorized
- Viewing works of art based upon a text

### **2. Interacting with the text**

- Asking and answering questions about it individually and together
- Sharing answers to questions worked on before the group meeting
- Individual and/or group paraphrasing or restatement of the text in their own words
- Discussing issues arising from the text
- Group or sub group dramatization of the passage
- Creative movement expressing the feelings conveyed or stirred by the passage
- Meditating upon passage and sharing of the results with other members
- Retelling the story
- Listing the issues raised by the text and discussing contemporary attitudes and responses to these issues

### **3. Responding to the text**

- Application questions to be discussed together or thought about individually
- Adopting spiritual disciplines which aid the application of biblical truth, such as prayer, keeping a journal, financial giving, time spent in service, personal Bible Study, etc
- Scripture response exercises, mission or action discussions and assignments
- Accountability questions
- Mission questions
- Relational exercises
- Times of silence
- Individual and corporate prayer

## Appendix 5B - Questions for different times

From: Earley, D., & Dempsey, R. (2007). *The pocket guide to leading a small group: 52 practical ways to become a better small group leader*. Houston, TX: Touch Publications. 59-61

1. Introducing the discussion
  - a. "Who laid down the law in your family?"
  - b. Why do parents make rules?
  - c. Which rule did you like the least?
  - d. Which family member tried to get around the rules? How?
  - e. What were the consequences of breaking the rules?"
2. Guiding the discussion
  - a. "What did you feel as you read these words?"
  - b. "Why do you think God put this passage in the Bible?"
  - c. "Who will paraphrase this passage in their own words?"
  - d. "Who else would like to comment on that?"
3. Summarizing the discussion
  - a. "Who will try to summarize the main things we are learning (or we have said) in just one or two sentences?"
  - b. "If a stranger rang the door bell and asked you what our group discussed tonight, what would you say?"
  - c. "Who else? Would you say anything different or in addition to what he (or she) said?"
4. Applying the discussion
  - a. "What one thing that was discussed tonight do you want to remember all week?"
  - b. "Specifically, how will your life be different this week because we studied this passage tonight?"
  - c. "What do you hope to do differently or more of based on what we talked about tonight?"
  - d. "In light of what we've learned tonight, does anyone here have anything they'd like to confess or share with the group?"

Earley, D., & Dempsey, R. (2007). *The pocket guide to leading a small group: 52 practical ways to become a better small group leader*. Houston, TX: Touch Publications. 60-61

## Appendix 5C – GG Ground Rules and Promises

1. The primary purpose for our group is to share Christ's love with others.
2. The secondary purpose for our group is to grow spiritually.
3. We will follow the ground rules listed below:
  - a. **Priority:** Our group, the meetings, and its starting time will be given priority in our schedules.
  - b. **Participation:** Everyone will freely participate in each group activities and meetings, and no one will dominate them.
  - c. **Respect:** Each has a right to one's own opinion and all questions and answers will be respected. Unsolicited advice is not allowed.
  - d. **Confidentiality:** Everything that is said in group meetings is never to be repeated outside of the meeting.
  - e. **Openness:** This group will be open to new people at every occasion.
  - f. **Support:** Permission is given for all to call on each other in time of need.
  - g. **Multiply:** We agree to fill the empty chair and to work towards multiplying our group in one year.
  - h. **Growth:** Each member will encourage the others' spiritual growth and movement.
  - i. **Accountability:** We are to hold one another accountable to meet any commitments mutually agreed upon by this group.
  - j. **Responsibility:** We agree to share responsibilities within the group.

By sharing honestly with each other in these sessions, holding to these ground rules and opening our hearts fully to God's direction, we will take some important steps in growing as disciples and in helping our group to become a life-changing experience for each one of us. Let's begin our journey together! By the way, we are beginning this journey on \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_, and our names are:

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## Appendix 5D – Weekly Report

### 1. GG info

GG name \_\_\_\_\_

Day and date of meeting \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Week # \_\_\_\_\_

Place \_\_\_\_\_ Dialogue # \_\_\_\_\_ Topic \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Participants ☒

1. ☐ Leader8. ☐2. ☐ Leader9. ☐3. ☐ Leader10. ☐4. ☐11. ☐5. ☐12. ☐6. ☐13. ☐7. ☐14. ☐

### 3. Attendance summary

a. SDA members present \_\_\_\_\_

b. Guests (non-baptized SDA present) \_\_\_\_\_

c. Total people attended \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Meeting

 How long did the meeting last? (Welcome to Works): \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. Evaluate the meeting (circle it)

(1 Need help &lt;-----&gt; 10 Excellent)

a. Welcome it got us closer to each other? 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

b. Worship worshiped and focused on God? 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

c. Word shared and listened to God? 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

d. Works is God working through us? 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

e. Wasting time we dialogued and knew each other? 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

f. Meeting in general 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

### 6. Do you need to talk to pastor about the group?

 No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_

### 7. Commentaries – Testimonies - Prayers

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## APPENDIX 5E – GG DIALOGUE # 003 – SUCCESS

**Objective of today's dialogue:** Challenge your group to make the Bible their guide and final authority for all their decisions.

**Additional resources:** Read and study the material in the following pages for context and further comprehension.

### **Welcome (15)** – Fellowship

- Were you ever appointed to replace a very talented and successful person? Share how it feels.
- What do you think is the reason why some people are successful in life while others are not?

### **Worship (15)** – Worship

- Read Psalms 34.1-3
- Breathe
- Above all
- Thanksgiving time: Do a popcorn prayer in which each person can give thanks to God for what he is doing in their lives.

### **Word (30)** – Discipleship

- Read Joshua 1.1-8
- What is God promising Joshua and the people of Israel? v1-5,8
- How would you feel if God promises you prosperity and success? v5
- Why do we need to be reminded that God will be at our side at all times? v5
- Why is God telling Joshua to be brave, courageous so many times? v6,7,9
- What does it mean not to turn to the right or left from the law? v7
- What do you think God is trying to tell us in v8?
- How can we meditate on it daily and keep it in our mouths? v8
- Why is success and prosperity tied with obeying and following God's counsel in the Bible?
- What benefits could we experience if we make the Bible our guide when making daily decisions?
- Share an experience where following God's advice gave you success.
- How are you integrating the principles of the Bible to your daily life?
- Would you like to study the Bible, get to know Jesus, and discover the divine principles for success?
- What is God telling you tonight?
- To do: Write now on a small card the key text of this week Joshua 1.8. Carry it in your wallet or pocket, place it in your fridge and memorize it.

### **Works (15)** – Ministry & Evangelism

- What can we do as a group to promote the Bible as the key to a successful life?
- Do you know anyone that needs to make the Bible the foundation of his-her life? how can we help them decide to follow God and His word?
- Write their names and invite them to next week group meeting
- Share the vision of reaching others so they can have Jesus as their Savior and experience real success in life.

### **Refreshments**– Fellowship

- Find the way by which you can talk to people during refreshments. Try to talk to those new in the group. Build relationships!

## DIALOGUE # 016 – UNDERSTANDING

**Objective of today's dialogue:** challenge people to be ready and willing to help others get to know God and understand his Word..

**Additional resources:** Read and study the material in the following pages.

### **Welcome (15)** – Fellowship

- What kind of things were hard for you to comprehend when you were in elementary school and why?
- Who helped you understand and how did he do it?
- What is it hard for you to understand now?

### **Worship (15)** – Worship

- Read Psalms 8.1-9
- I'm a friend of God
- Better than life
- Thanksgiving time! What are some of the joys that God has given you for which you are thankful? Pray fervently giving only thanks.

### **Word (30)** – Discipleship

- Read Acts 8.26-40
- What kind of Christian was Phillip considering the fact that an angel gives him a mission and he rapidly obeys it? v26,27
- What kind of a man was the one sitting on the chariot? v27-34
- How does staying near of people help us to fulfill God's mission? v29 How should we do it?
- When should we ask people if they understand? v30 Give examples
- How can we help people "understand" the Bible, God and current events? v31,35
- What are the four principles found in Acts 8.35 that we need to follow when helping people understand the Bible? (Principles: begin where they are; explain it with the Bible, show how it's good for them; center it all in Jesus)
- How prepared are you to help others understand the Bible? How could you be ready to help others understand the good news? v35
- Where can we get help so we understand?
- Why do you think the man asks for baptism? What is necessary to be baptized? v36-38
- What is the relationship between rejoicing in life with accepting Christ and being baptized? v39 How have you experienced it?
- What do you think God is trying to tell you tonight?
- How would you apply today's message from now on?
- To do: Memorize a verse on how to teach the Bible to others: Acts 8.35

### **Works - Witness (15)** – Ministry & Evangelism

- Ask someone from the group to share the vision of our GG.
- Ask group members if they feel ready to help others understand? what can we do as a group to be prepared in the basics of faith in order to help others?
- Do you know anyone who wants to understand more about God, the Bible and current events? Write down the names and challenge group members to invite them to GG.
- Finalize asking: How can we pray for you tonight?

### **Refreshments**– Fellowship

- Listen, listen, listen (you can eat too, but keep your ears open).

## DIALOGUE # 024 – INVITED

**Objective of today's dialogue:** Invite people to see that our choices reflect our priorities and will determine our eternal consequences. Invite each one to choose eternal life today.

**Additional resources:** Read and study the material in the following pages for context and further comprehension of the passages.

### **Welcome (15)** – Fellowship

- Why do people in our days attend parties and banquets?
- What makes you decide if you would go or not? Be honest please!
- How do you feel when people don't show up to a party you have organized? Why?

### **Worship (15)** – Worship

- Read Psalms 81.1-2
- Shout to the Lord
- Who am I
- Thanksgiving time: What is the most amazing thing God has done for you in your life? Briefly share it with the rest of the group. End praying in groups of three.

### **Word (30)** – Discipleship

- Read Luke 14.15-24
- Why do you think Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven with a huge party/banquet?
- Why do you think people excuse themselves from coming to the party? v18-20
- What was wrong in their excuses?
- How do you think God feels when we don't value or even pay attention to the great feast that He is preparing?
- What can we learn from v21 where the outcasts are invited to come?
- How is eternal life similar and different to this party?
- Why do you think the master wants the house to be full? v23
- What is the role of our choices here? v23,24
- How do you feel with the idea that not everyone will get to participate in the party?
- In what way is our role before God similar to the servant who carried the invitation?
- What kind of changes do you need to make in your life in order to make sure are not left out at God's party?
- What do you think is God trying to tell you tonight?
- Pray
- To do: Read and challenge people to memorize Matthew 6.33

### **Works - Witness (15)** – Ministry & Evangelism

- Think of people who need to be invited to the feast.
- Mention their names and pray for them. Plan to do something so they are invited!
- What is the purpose of our Growth Groups?
- How can we pray for you tonight?

### **Refreshments**– Fellowship

- Go around asking for names of people who need to be invited to Jesus Feast's.
- Make sure you invite them to the party!

## Appendix 5F – GG Meeting & Dialogue Planner

### Objective of today's dialogue

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#### **Welcome (15 minutes)** – Fellowship

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#### **Worship (15 minutes)** – Worship

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#### **Word (30 minutes)** – Discipleship

- Read 

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- Key text to write and memorize: 

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#### **Works (15 minutes)** – Ministry & Evangelism

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- ---
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#### **Wasting Time Together (Refreshments)** – Fellowship

**Question and Answers: (5 Minutes)**

- Give time for students to ask questions and provide simple answers.
- Remind everyone that instructors will be available after the session if they have further questions or comments

**Review the Practicum: (5 Minutes)**

- Mention what they need to turn in today as it was explained in the previous session
- Emphasize what they need to do for next week's meeting.

**Remind of next week's meeting (2 minutes)**

- Remind people at what time the next training will begin and ask them to be on time!
- Remind of the place of the next training.
- Remind also the materials they need to bring to class
  - GG training manual
  - Pencil, Bible, etc.

**Vision Sharing (3 minutes)**

- Briefly share a story of how GG helped reach someone for Christ
- Remind students of our GG vision: creating a movement that will help people reach their circle of influences for Christ.

**Prayer**

- End the training with a short prayer by one of the instructors.

# GG Leadership Development Program

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



## **Session # 6 – Organize (to DO)**

### ***Objective of session # 6:***

1. Help students understand how group stages affect group life.
2. Challenge students to plan and organize their group life.
3. Help students see the need of a clear vision.

### ***Materials needed for session:***

1. Bible, GG student manual, white board and markers, pencils and papers.
2. Computer, projector and PPT

***Suggested time for this session:*** 90 minutes

### ***Optional additional reading materials for the instructor:***

1. Barna, G. (2003). *The power of vision*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books.
2. Boren, M. S. (2010). *Missional small groups: Becoming a community that makes a difference in the world*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
3. Earley, D. (2001a). *The 8 habits of effective small group leaders*. Houston, TX: Cell Group Resources.
4. Earley, D. (2001b). *Turning members into leaders*. Houston, TX: Cell Group Resources.

### ***Today's program: Session # 6***

1. Welcome and prayer
2. Thanksgiving:
  - Thank each one for reading, studying and working hard to become GG leaders.
3. Review of today's session program: Briefly explain today's program
  - Introduction exercise
  - Study of session (fill in the blanks, exercises, discussion in groups, etc)
  - Question and answers
  - Practicum's follow up: Homework!
  - Prayer
4. Introductory exercise
5. Study of Session # 6
6. Time for questions and answers
7. Practicum's follow up: Homework!
8. Vision Sharing: why are we doing this?
9. Prayer

## **Session # 6 – Organize (to DO)**

### ***Introductory exercise: (5 minutes)***

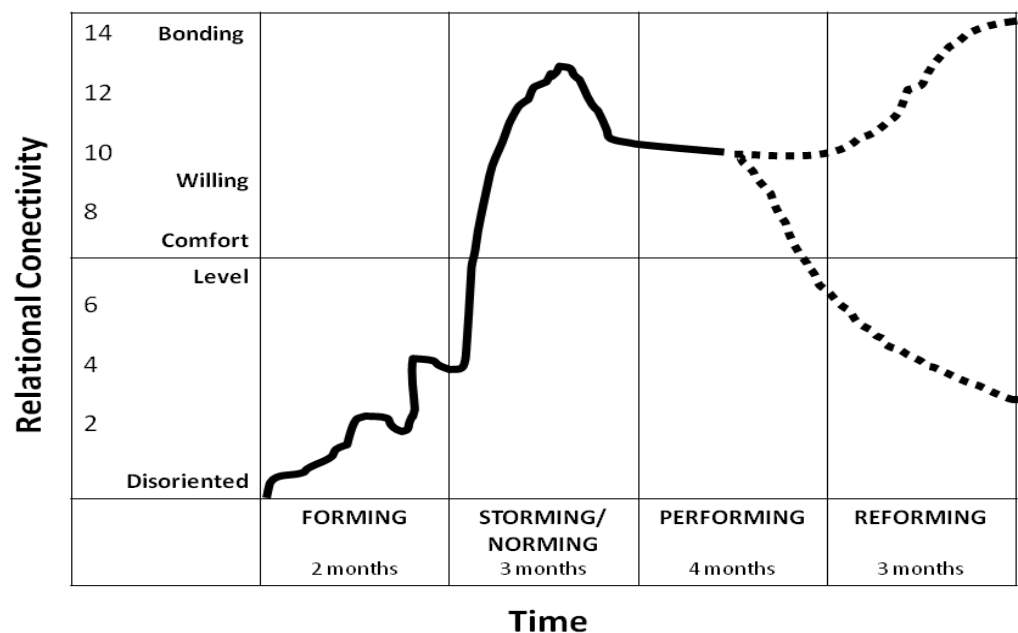
1. Option # 1: Bring to the class two or three people who were reached through GG. Ask them in advance to be prepared to share what GG did for them, what they loved, and why they decided to be baptized?
2. Option # 2: Download a testimony from [www.GrowthGroups.net](http://www.GrowthGroups.net) and show it!

***Transition (you may say):*** Thanks for your testimonies. We can see how our GG are making a difference in people's lives. Today we will talk about how to organize group life so our groups fulfill all that they were ment to be. And for that reason let's begin by reading 1 Corinthians 14:33, 40 and let's see what it has to do with organization and planning

### **1. Key Passage: 1 CORINTHIANS 14.33,40**

### **2. Stages of Group life:**

- a. Each group goes throw different stages in its life as times goes by. Knowing these stages will help the leaders understand what is going on and how to help the group move forward.
- b. There are many ways in which to divide the stages of group life and each author has a different twist on it. I have chosen to follow one derived from the group development model that according to S.P. Greggo, "has gained extensive acceptance and applicability in diverse settings".
- c. For each stage a general and average time frame will be given. Be aware that each group grows and moves through the different stages at different speed.



i. **FORMING Stage** – up to 2 months

1. This stage is described by many as the honeymoon stage.
2. There is a lot of dreaming and questioning happening at the same time.
3. People are exploring, and getting acquainted.
4. This is a time to test the waters.
5. It's very common for group members to question themselves if they really want to be part of the group.
6. People usually refer to the group mentioning the names of the leaders: Ex. "Luis and Penny's group"
7. Members may experience attraction and repulsion at the same time.
8. People shouldn't be compelled to STAY.
9. This could also be called the ice-breaker stage
10. Leaders should focus in:
  - a. Sharing the mission, vision of the group.
  - b. Dedicate time to know everyone's story, dreams, hobbies, challenges, and passions.
  - c. Invest time in social activities like picnics, games, etc.
  - d. The leader should be the first to share his story and be transparent.
11. The goal at this stage is to build RELATIONSHIPS.

ii. **STORMING/NORMING Stage** – up to 3 months

1. This is the stage of conflict and consolidation of the group
2. Members begin to feel at ease and then problems arise.
3. People begin to take off their masks, real personalities appear and problems become more often.
4. Contradictory opinions are frequent.
5. People will refer to the group as "OUR group". This is a great sign of ownership
6. The leaders must display empathy.
7. Leaders may need to help the group navigate through these difficult waters, teaching the group how to resolve conflict, applying Matthew 18, confronting, forgiving and asking for forgiveness.
8. Leaders should focus in: understanding, openness, and flexibility. This is the time to grow in worship, prayer, in-depth sharing during word time.



9. The goal of this stage is to become a FAMILY. The group needs to take ownership and accept those with different points of view and flaws.

iii. **PERFORMING Stage** – up to 4 months

1. This is the achievement stage.
2. In the first two stages the group focused mainly in itself, internally, but now is the time to look beyond ourselves and grow in ministering to others outside of our GG.
3. If the group doesn't reach this stage it could deform into a spiritual or social club.
4. Most groups begin evangelizing from day one, but if the group didn't begin to reach others they should be doing it now.
5. If the group doesn't evangelize it will begin to die.
6. Fresh blood (new visitors) makes the group exciting and alive.
7. EVANGELIZING and MINISTERING are a priority at this stage.
8. Leaders should focus in: outreach, inviting new people to the meetings, plan harvest events, do Matthew parties, etc.
9. Leaders need to challenge members to take risks with their friends.
10. Leaders continue to DELEGATE more and more parts of the group meeting to other members. The goal is have new leaders developed and be ready for multiplication.
11. For more simple outreach ideas visit [www.kindness.com](http://www.kindness.com)
12. The goal of this stage is to have the entire group involved in mission, trying to reach their circle of influence for Christ.

iv. **REFORMING Stage** – up to 3 months

1. This is the stage for giving birth, or multiplication.
2. Multiplication should be seen and felt as a CELEBRATION, never as a separation or division.
3. Make it a point to often emphasize that God doesn't divide his followers, instead He wants them to multiply.
4. The whole group should be involved in the process of birthing.
5. Everyone needs to know when this will happen, who will be the new leaders, and who will go with whom.
6. The leaders in training should lead the meeting while the leaders coach them.
7. The most important thing is not a specific number of members in the group in order to multiply, but new DEVELOPED LEADERS.
8. Leaders should focus in:

- a. Continue to develop the new leaders. By this time, the new leaders should have taken the GG training offered at church.
  - b. Give constant feedback to the new leaders and involve them in all the decisions pertaining the group.
  - c. Preparing the people in the group for multiplication,
  - d. Pray fervently for the new groups
  - e. Plan and make a birthday/celebration party.
  - f. Constantly share the vision of multiplication and reaching the lost for Christ
9. Remember: the knowledge of stages doesn't produce growth in the group. Instead, prayer, witnessing, and developing new leaders under the guidance of the Holy Spirit will foster it.
  10. It's normal to have a sense of empty nesters when the new group begins, but it's necessary for the salvation of souls.
  11. Make sure you read and study more on this topic in Session # 10 – Multiply.

### **3. Key elements for leaders to create in group life**

- a. Create shared experiences
- b. Create shared memories
- c. Create a common language

### **4. PRACTICAL ideas for Group Life based on the stage in which your GG is now**

- a. Many of the following ideas can be used at more than one stage, so be wise and use them profusely throughout the stages of group life.
- b. **Forming stage – up to 2 months**
  - i. Concentrate on:
    1. Creating opportunities for people to relate and get to know each other.
    2. It's the time to develop meaningful relationships.
    3. Find the way for people to tell their stories, share their hobbies and most meaningful times in their lives.
    4. Look for ways to share more life together:
    5. Social activities that build relationships among members
  - ii. Ideas:
    1. Have a group dinner where each person/family will have 5 or 10 minutes to share their lives. They can bring pictures, prepare power points, bring short videos of themselves, dress and cook some food from their original country and share it with the rest.

2. Organize day where a family invites another family for lunch, or dinner. All families could be doing it during the same week or even day.
3. Do a picnic and prepare activities that will foster getting to know others
4. Have a “guys night out” or a “girls night out”
5. Use the phone to keep in touch with members throughout the week
6. Visit the zoo together
7. Go to do exercise with others from your group
8. Go to the supermarket along with other moms
9. Go out as a group to ride bicycles
10. Go to the beach or mountains together
11. Eat together as many times as possible!
12. Practice worship together
  - a. Receive the Sabbath together.
  - b. Sit together as a group at church
  - c. One night at group meeting sing the songs preferred by each person

c. **Storming/Norming** – up to 3 months

- i. Concentrate on:
  1. Helping people process their differences
  2. Create share experiences that will create share memories
  3. Share experiences and memories will create a common language
  4. The group needs to become “OUR” group
  5. Build the spiritual family
- ii. Ideas:
  1. Continue to use the PHONE
  2. Do a campout as a group
  3. Do a temperament assessment with your group and see what each one brings as an asset to the family
  4. Prepare a photo slide show or short video about your group’s life. You can use [www.animoto.com](http://www.animoto.com) or other similar
  5. Make home prayer visits
  6. Hold a group FAST
  7. Have a half-night of PRAYER
  8. Establish a PRAYER chain
  9. Have a communion service for your group (talk to your pastor and elder about it to get permission and orientation)
  10. Read a spiritual book together as a group, like Purpose Driven Life or Experiencing God
  11. Give Bible studies to visitors and their families
  12. Attend a Christian concert together

13. Learn to worship God in different ways. Dave Early identified 14 different forms of worship in the Bible
  - a. Being silent in awe (Is 6)
  - b. Kneeling or lying face down in absolute surrender (Rev 4)
  - c. Confessing sin (2 Sam 12; Ps 51)
  - d. Shouting in thanksgiving (Ps 42.4; 66.1-2; 71.23; 98.4; 100.1)
  - e. Trembling in reverence (Rev 5.8)
  - f. Resolving to obey (Gen 22)
  - g. Praising in the midst of difficulties (Job 1)
  - h. Giving God offerings out of gratitude (2 Sam 24; 1 Kings 8; 2 Chron 5-6)
  - i. Yielding your will (Jonah 2)
  - j. Dancing (2 Sam 6; Ps 149.3)
  - k. Singing for joy (Ex 15; Ps 21.13; 63.45; 71.22)
  - l. Playing musical instruments (Ps 43.4; 71.22; 98.4-6)
  - m. Clapping your hands (Ps 47.1)
  - n. Lifting your hands (Ps 63.4; 134.2)
14. Encourage the group to practice the presence of God together

d. **Performing** – up to 4 months

- i. Concentrate on
  1. Doing evangelism and reaching the circle of influence of each one that is part of the group
  2. Ministering to the needs of the extended 'family' of the group. Find ways in which to meet the needs.
  3. Develop the future leaders by giving them plenty of opportunities to lead the group and organize activities
- ii. Ideas
  1. Challenge your group to memorize Bible verses
  2. Learn as a group how to practice and prepare for Sabbath
  3. Have a movie night followed by a discussion of the right and wrong principles taught in the movie
  4. Watch together the movie "The end of the spear" and discuss afterwards what it means to be a missionary, the cost of sharing Christ, God's call to witnessing, etc. Also the movie "The window" by Pr Alejandro Bullon
  5. Do the spiritual gifts survey with your group and find ways to use each person's gifts in reaching others.
  6. Continue to use Matthew parties for the discovery and development of new relationships
  7. Set up mentors/or accountability PARTNERS
  8. BABY-SIT for a couple so they can go out
  9. Help someone MOVE
  10. Tackle a MISSION project together

11. Distribute free water bottles at a park, street light, or event
12. Discover people in need in your community and find ways to help them
13. As a group offer 'free hugs' at an event
14. Make more Matthew parties inviting non believers to mingle with Christians (see more on Matthew parties on Session # 8)
15. Share the different parts of the meeting with other people in the group
16. Do prayer walks around the neighborhood (walk and pray in front of people's houses). Try not to look suspicious!
17. Volunteer to do some community service and get to know other people
18. Have your group volunteer to do a block party.

e. **Reforming** – up to 3 months

i. Concentrate on

1. Giving birth to the new group
2. Let the new leaders do all the job of leading
3. Training your new leaders thoroughly
4. Planning and organizing the new group

ii. Ideas

1. Pray for each member to become a leader
2. Talk to the people in your group who have proven to be ready to take the GG training and become new leaders
3. Invite people to pray for the multiplication of the group
4. Celebrate the birth of the new group with a big party
5. Ask the church leaders to have a dedication ceremony where the new leaders are prayed for and send into GG leadership
6. Share the vision of multiplication and reaching a lost world at every meeting, and at every encounter with a group member
7. Have communion service with the group before multiplying
8. Make sure you take pictures of your group before multiplying and give it to the members to remember.

5. **BIBLE STUDIES and group life**

- a. Bible studies are an integral part of group life
- b. Because the group meetings are a time to reach others and it's always an open meeting, doing Bible studies with visitors should be done outside of the regular meeting time.
- c. Find what would be the most appropriate time to do it during the week and see what person from your group could be willing to guide the new believer into becoming a disciple of Christ.
- d. If at some point there are several individuals who want to take Bible studies, the leaders should consider the possibility of having a Bible Study Class that would meet during the week.

- e. See Session # 8 for more information on what to study, what should be achieved, and other ideas about studying the Bible and sharing Christ with your friends.

## 6. Remember

- a. Group life is about living life together as the family of God
- b. Group life has the purpose in reaching others for the kingdom of God
- c. Do life, give life, enjoy life together!

## 7. Sharing the Vision – God’s dream

- a. **A man with a DREAM:** Pastor David Paul Cho, started dreaming with 150 members while meeting at a tent, he ate with the dream, went to bed thinking about it, walk like a pastor of 150, and preached like a pastor of 150 members... at the end of that year God gave him 150. He then dreamed with 300, 600, and eventually with 500,000 members with 50,000 cell groups!
- b. **What is vision?**
  - i. “Vision is a PICTURE held in your mind’s eye of the way things could or should be in the days ahead. Vision connotes a visual reality. A portrait of conditions that do not exist currently. This picture is internalized and personal.” George Barna, *The power of Vision*, 29.
  - ii. “Vision for ministry is a clear mental image of a preferable FUTURE imparted by God to His chosen servants and is based upon an accurate understanding of GOD, SELF and CIRCUMSTANCES.” George Barna, *The power of vision*, 24.
  - iii. “Vision is a clear compelling picture of a BETTER TOMORROW, that inspires people to change, to get involved, to care and to do things that contribute to the common good.” George Barna, *Leaders on Leadership*, 49.
- c. **How important is a vision-dream for a leader?**
  - i. “Let’s get one thing straight from the start. If you want to be a leader, vision is not an OPTION; it is part of the standard equipment of a real leader ... “the equation is quite simple, no VISION = no LEADERSHIP.” George Barna, *Leaders on Leadership*, 48, 51
  - ii. “Cell leaders will set a goal for doubling the cell in a given period of time. These goals can be reached as the Holy Spirit anoints people like yourself....Someone has said, ‘I’d rather shoot at a goal and miss it than shoot at nothing and hit it!’” Ralph Neighbour, *New Believer Station*, 75.
  - iii. Billy Graham said “when our God is SMALL, the world looks big; but when our God is BIG, the world looks small.” Quoted by Dave Earley, *Turning members into leaders*, 15.

- d. **ADVANTAGES of describing a dream-vision to your GG.** (ideas from Dave Early, Turning members into leaders, and 8 Habits of Small Group Leaders)
  - i. **Increases POTENTIAL.** Most GG leaders are sleeping giants. Imagine one GG that multiplies into a multiplying group every year for ten years. After the first year, 1 has become 2, after the second year, 2 has become 4. In the third year 4 becomes 8, then 16 in the fourth year, 32 in the fifth, 64 in the sixth, 128 in the seventh, 256 in the eighth, 512 in the ninth, and finally by the tenth year 1028 groups! The potential of a man is only measured by the GOALS he pursues.
  - ii. **Aids ACCOMPLISHMENT.** Without a dream nothing happens. Without a dream your group will slowly but surely die.
  - iii. **Gives the sense that we are going SOMEWHERE.** People love to feel they are going somewhere, that they are a part of something that has a future, purpose and makes a difference.
  - iv. **Attracts PEOPLE.** Listen the “I have a dream” speech of Rev. King and see if you are not attracted to it.
  - v. **Produces LEADERS.** “Listeners are turned into learners, learners are turned into leaders, and leaders are turned into multipliers through hearing and having a dream.” Dave Earley, Turning members into Leaders, 58.
  - vi. **Raises MORALE.** People forget what they are doing very easily, and need to be constantly reminded.
  - vii. **Builds MOMENTUM.** When the group begins maximum momentum is crucially necessary.
  - viii. **Inspires SACRIFICES for a larger cause.** W. Churchill shared a vision and asked the people of England for a sacrifice in order to resist Hitler’s threat. They did it.
  - ix. **Increases the VALUE of the group.** As the leader shares the vision for growth, health, and multiplication, that dream changes people.
  - x. **Positively predicts the FUTURE.** Joel Comiskey researched groups around the world and found that: “Cell leaders who know their goal – when their groups will give birth – consistently multiply their groups more often than leaders who don’t know. In fact, if a cell leader fails to

set goals that the cell members can clearly remember, he has about a 50-50 chance of multiplying his cell. But if the leader sets goals, the chance of multiplying increases to THREE out of four.” Joel Comiskey, Home Cell Group Explosion, 47.

**e. Dreams worth dreaming:**

**i. Grow in HEALTH.**

1. Factors present in a healthy group: people are cared for, invited, welcomed, the Lord is fervently worshipped, people want to hear and apply God’s Word, members are loved, relationships flourish, spiritual growth and transformation are evident.
2. Some barriers to group health are: Pride (James 4.6); sin (Psalm 66.18); unresolved conflict (Matthew 5.23,24).

**ii. Increase in NUMBERS.**

1. Living things either grow or die.
2. Barriers: limited physical space; lack of spiritual life; lack of intentional outreach; failure to maintain contact with the members; no social activities to bond the group and attract new people; failure of the leader to share responsibilities with apprentices.

**iii. Multiply into MULTIPLYING groups.**

1. 2 Timothy 2.2
2. Barriers to multiplying: failure to have and mentor apprentices; failure to plan to multiply. Dave Earley, 8 Habits of Effective Small Group Leaders, 24-26.

**f. Characteristics of a good goal: it needs to be SMART.**

- i. S SPECIFIC
- ii. M MEASURABLE
- iii. A ATTAINABLE
- iv. R RELEVANT
- v. T TIME oriented.

**g. Examples of vision.**

- i. “To help every cell member complete the year of equipping;
- ii. To bring at least one person to Christ during my internship,
- iii. To assist my cell leader to successfully multiply our cell within six months”. Don James, Cell Leader Training, intensive II, section 10, p13.

**h. 8 essentials for going from dream to reality**

- i. Get with GOD and get His dream for your life and ministry
- ii. WRITE it down and picture it. Sign and date the dream.



- iii. Refer to it FREQUENTLY.
- iv. BELIEVE God can and will do it
- v. ASK God to do it
- vi. PLAN to fulfill your part. Share it all the time and in as many ways as possible.
- vii. WORK like it all depends on you. PRAY like it all depends on God
- viii. Start SMALL, but speak and live like the dream is becoming a REALITY.  
Dave Earley, *Turning members into leaders*, 21

i. Westchester Adventist Youth Growth Groups Vision

- i. To double the number of GG by multiplying them by September 2010.
  - ii. To double the number of GG every year.
  - iii. Is it SMART? Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time Oriented.
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**Explain: (5 Minutes)**

- Ask the students to go now to the Appendix material of this session.
- Explain the value of each material.
- Explain what you expect them to do with it.

**8. Appendix review:**

- a. Appendix 6A - God's dream and mine

**9. Recommended reading:**

- a. Barna, G. (2003). *The power of vision*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books.
- b. Boren, M. S. (2010). *Missional small groups: Becoming a community that makes a difference in the world*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- c. Earley, D. (2001a). *The 8 habits of effective small group leaders*. Houston, TX: Cell Group Resources.
- d. Earley, D. (2001b). *Turning members into leaders*. Houston, TX: Cell Group Resources.

**Appendix 6A - God's dream and mine** - (adapted from D. Earley, Turning members into Leaders, 67)

1. I have a definite dream for my group. T or F  
My dream is:
  
2. I need to get with God to get a definite dream for multiplying my group. T or F  
If not, I will do this (when):
  
3. I've described the dream to the key people involved, allowing them to add to it and own it. T or F
  
4. I've written a dream statement that's specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-oriented, and that clarifies and directs what we're trying to do. T or F
  
5. I've shared the dream with my group. T or F  
If not, I will do this (when):
  
6. I need to share the dream using more mediums. T or F  
If true, I will do this (when):
  
7. I need to share the dream more passionately, relevantly, confidently, humbly, publicly, and privately. T or F  
If true, I will do this (when):
  
8. I need to share the dream more persistently. T or F  
If true, I will do this

**Question and Answers: (5 Minutes)**

- Give time for students to ask questions and provide simple answers.
- Remind everyone that instructors will be available after the session if they have further questions or comments

**Review the Practicum: (5 Minutes)**

- Review where each one should be at this point.
- Mention what they need to turn in today as it was explained in the previous session
- Emphasize what they need to do for next week's meeting.
- Explain also what to do if you have fallen behind

**Remind of next week's meeting (2 minutes)**

- Remind people at what time the next training will begin and ask them to be on time!
- Remind of the place of the next training.
- Remind also the materials they need to bring to class

**Vision Sharing (3 minutes)**

- Ask students why are we doing this?
- The vision of our GG is to create a movement of groups that will help each person reach those in their circle of influence, help people grow into mature disciples of Jesus and be ready for his second coming

**Prayer**

- End the training with prayer.

# GG Leadership Development Program

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



## **Session # 7 – Relate (to DO)**

### ***Objective of session # 7:***

1. Encourage students to purposely seek and develop deeper levels of relationships with their group members
2. Help leaders model good communication skills that would foster community
3. Give students tools on how to handle challenging situations and people

### ***Materials needed for session:***

1. Bible, GG student manual, white board and markers, pencils and papers.
2. Computer, projector and PPT

***Suggested time for this session:*** 90 minutes

### ***Optional additional reading materials for the instructor:***

1. Boren, M. S. (2007b). *The relational way: From small group structures to holistic life connections*. Houston, TX: TOUCH Publications.
2. Boren, M. S. (2011). *MissioRelate: Becoming a church of missional small groups*. Houston, TX: TOUCH Publications.
3. Sande, K. (1997). *The peacemaker: A biblical guide to resolving personal conflict* (2nd ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

### ***Today's program: Session # 7***

1. Welcome and prayer
2. Thanksgiving: talk about how much you appreciate the students commitment to the training program
3. Review of today's session program: Briefly explain today's program
  - Introduction exercise
  - Study of session (fill in the blanks, exercises, discussion in groups, etc.)
  - Question and answers
  - Practicum's follow up: Homework!
  - Prayer
4. Introductory exercise
5. Study of Session # 7
6. Time for questions and answers
7. Practicum's follow up: Homework!
8. Vision Sharing: share how relationships are everything and how our vision of GG enhances deeper levels of community and communication
9. Prayer

**Session # 7 – Relate (to DO)****Introductory exercise: (5 minutes)**

1. Show on the screen or direct people to Appendix 7C - People you might have in your GG
2. Ask each student to fill the exercise as described there in 5 minutes.
3. Ask students to share out loud who is for the most difficult for them and why? (if you don't have too many students you can ask each one this question)

**Transition (you may say):** Yes there are some people that God allows to come to our groups that are more challenging than others. Today we will talk about why do we even need to develop deeper relationships with people. Let's begin by reading our key passage...

**1. Key Passage: 1 THESSALONIANS 2.8****2. The need of community**

- a. According to Genesis 2.18 God didn't think it was a good idea to leave Adam alone. We were DESIGNED to live in community.
- b. Since God himself knows by experience what it means to live in a close relationship He wants humans to experience the same joy He has in the Trinity, a joy of living with others.
- c. God is love and RELATIONSHIPS are His CORE.
- d. Our current situation:
  - i. According to George Gallup Jr, "[Americans] are among the LONELIEST people in the world."
  - ii. Will Miller concludes "I've slowly come to the conclusion that the core emotional problem of modern life is this: a pervasive persona DETACHMENT and ALOOFNESS from other people."
- e. An urgent need:
  - i. Will Miller adds: "the American church has to learn not only how to do small groups but how to do RELATIONSHIPS."
  - ii. Larry Crab declares: "The FUTURE of the church depends on whether it develops true community. We can get by for a while on size, skilled communication, and programs to meet every need, but unless we sense that we BELONG to each other, with masks off, the vibrant church of today will become the POWERLESS church of tomorrow. Stale, irrelevant, a place of pretense where sufferers suffer alone, where pressure generates conformity rather than the Spirit creating life-that's where the church is headed unless it focuses on community."

- f. Levels of connection: Edward Hall describes four “spaces or distances that determine how a person relates to others.”
  - i. PUBLIC space of belonging      Large crowd
  - ii. SOCIAL space of belonging      70 to 120
  - iii. PERSONAL space of belonging      10 to 12
  - iv. INTIMATE space of belonging      2 or 3
  1. These last people have REFRIGERATOR rights!
  2. “People who live in this intimate space have absolute permission to be FAMILY”
- v. Jesus understood and used these principles in working with people. He worked with the crowd, the seventy two, the twelve, and the close three.
- vi. The smaller the group the more TIME and INTIMACY He had with them.
- g. Most people today function with an operating system of INDIVIDUALISM and PRAGMATISM. But we need to function on one of RELATIONSHIPS
- h. According to Jesus in John 13.35, the final APOLOGETIC the world uses to judge if Christianity is real is our relationship (communion-love) with each other.
- i. God has brought you to be the leader of a Growth Group because He wants you to LIVE with them, to EXPERIENCE life challenges together, to support and encourage each other.
- j. As GG leaders we are called to live close to people. Relationships are not there simply for support or even enjoyment, it’s the PURPOSE of the game!

### 3. Group Dynamics

- a. It is vital for the leaders of a GG to carefully consider the different factors that influence in the group dynamics.
- b. The size or composition, the environment and seating arrangement, the personalities and backgrounds, the gender and socio-economical lifestyles, all influence on how the group will relate and chose to do life as a group.
- c. **Social needs:** According to Judy Hamlin, each person that comes to your group brings three social needs. The way people relate to each other will reflect in one way or another, these three basic social needs. They are:
  - i. The need for BELONGING
  - ii. The need for SIGNIFICANCE
  - iii. The need for ACCEPTANCE”
- d. **EGR people - EXTRA GRACE required people**
  - i. Many people have the idea that most of those attending a group are ‘normal’ people and capable to function well in the life of the group.

- ii. But there are those people (the EGR) whom seem to behave abnormally and that at some points might even seem to be dangerous for the group and its community efforts. This are often called the problematic people who need the extra grace from the rest, so they can be at least tolerated.
- iii. We need to remember tough, that EVERY person in every group is sinful, it's imperfect and needs a Savior.
- iv. We are all at different levels emotional, unpredictable at times, and a little unstable.
- v. All of us, in one way or another, are problem people. So we should be very careful in labeling others and excluding them whenever possible.
- vi. At the same time, it's also true that there are some people who you may encounter that have emotional wounds, mental illnesses, personality disorders that often more require professional help than a group can give.
- vii. In general groups encounter people that could be from annoying to potentially destructive.
- viii. The solution is not to isolate or ignore them, but instead to help them grow, become fully integrated into the life of the group.
- ix. In doing so the community in the group will be enhanced and the kingdom of God would become even more real!
- x. Less Parrot declared that "the effort you exert to improve a difficult relationship is almost always rewarded with new vitality for you and your group".

**e. How to handle DOMINATING members or a TALKER in a GG meeting?**

- i. Remember: The GG leader is the pastor of the group and the one responsible for allowing all members to share and from stopping one person from MONOPOLIZING the discussion.
- ii. In order to give the talker less eye contact SIT right next to him/her
- iii. Remind the group that in GG we value each person's opinion, and that when we all share everyone benefits.
- iv. Redirect the discussion: When the talker BREATHS or SWALLOWS (knowing that some don't!) redirect the dialogue away from them. You may say: "what do the rest think?"
- v. Recognition of WANDERING: "this is interesting. However, we've left our topic..."
- vi. Reaffirming SILENCE: some talkers are uncomfortable with silence so instinctively they will talk so there is no silence. The GG leader can do well to reaffirm and help the group practice directed moments of silence.
- vii. After or before the meeting talk personally and ask for his HELP in achieving the purpose of the group.
- viii. Talk to your GG COACH, or pastor asking for advice
- ix. Try mentioning that since we are looking for participation, people are allowed to share a second opinion only when EVERYONE has done it.

**f. How to handle someone who RARELY participates**

- i. Caution: people process information and participate in discussions in very different ways. Just because someone is quieter than you, doesn't mean there is something wrong with him.
- ii. What could you do?
  1. Give the person more eye contact: people usually interpret eye contact as an invitation to talk
  2. Involvement: as much as possible and according to the person's gifts and interests involve him in the meeting and in the group life.
  3. Praise effusively: Whenever the person participates in the life of the group make sure to recognize it before the entire group. Just make sure you don't overdo it!
  4. One on one: try spending more time with the person. Do more intentional group life with that person. If this is someone from the opposite sex, you could invite one more person to join you.
- iii. Make sure the person knows the group highly values him

**g. Group dynamics and difficult questions in group meetings**

- i. How to respond to questions could be a great challenge for GG leaders and can greatly affect the flow of the meeting.
- ii. David Cox argues that "in relational dynamics, even when group members ask questions, the leader ought not to answer them. The leader's task is to lead – lead the group to DISCOVER truth and gain insight by thinking and working things out for themselves."
- iii. When difficult questions arise, follow Jesus example and ask another question. David Cox suggest using:
  1. "EXTENDING questions ('would you like to say anything else about that?' or 'Could you go into a bit more detail?')
  2. CLARIFYING questions ('Could you explain what a bit more fully? What do you mean by that?')
  3. JUSTIFYING questions ('Why do you think that is true?')
  4. RE-DIRECTING questions ('What does the rest of the group think?' 'Jane, what do you think think/feel about this?')
  5. REFLECTING questions ('That's an interesting point. Are you saying that ...?').
- iv. Remember also that you can:
  1. Respond to "wrong" answers by saying "what do the rest think?"; or 'does anyone know other Scripture passages that may help us here?'.  - 2. Respond difficult questions honestly: simply say, "I don't know".

**h. Confronting**

- v. There will be some times when group members or visitors might need to be confronted.



- vi. Harvey Bertcher reminds us that “in confrontation, an individual is informed of an INCONSISTENCY’ between something said or done, or said and done and a fact”.
- vii. When should GG leaders use confrontation? Bertcher argues...
  - 1. “When the inconsistency is getting the person in trouble with the group or is putting his own life in danger
  - 2. When the person doesn’t seem to realize the full extent of his actions
- viii. Remember:
  - 1. The goal is to restore the person, to reduce discrepancy and help the person grow, not to prove him wrong
  - 2. Be very careful in choosing the right time and place.
  - 3. Always avoid confronting in front of whole group, unless is extremely necessary.
  - 4. Avoid actions or words that could be perceived as judging or attacking
  - 5. Be careful with the tone of your voice
  - 6. Choose to inform rather than accuse
  - 7. Make sure you have a constructive approach
  - 8. Try to use few sentences and to the point
  - 9. Have a relaxed physical posture.

#### 4. How to demonstrate INTEREST?

- a. Dale Carnegie, in his book *How to win friends and influence people*, lists six ways in which to connect with people and show them interest after saying hello
  - i. Become genuinely interested in others
  - ii. Smile
  - iii. Say the person’s name often
  - iv. Be a good listener. Encourage others to talk about themselves
  - v. Talk about other person’s interests
  - vi. Make the other person feel important — be sincere

#### 5. Emotional tank fillers:

- a. People who full emotional tanks function relate better, have more energy, are willing to begin new things and are capable of reaching deeper levels of community and group life.
- b. There are verbal and non-verbal tank drainers and fillers
- c. What is affected by the level in a person’s emotional tank?
  - i. Energy level
  - ii. Attitude
  - iii. Engagement
  - iv. Self-perception
  - v. The willingness to try new things, to take risks

- vi. Performance: The perception of how successful one can be at a specific task or project
- d. What drains people's emotional tanks?
  - i. Discouraging words (sarcasm included)
  - ii. Criticism
  - iii. Cold or ignoring attitudes
  - iv. Physical, social, financial problems
  - v. Family challenges
- e. What fills people's emotional tanks?
  - i. ACCEPTANCE giving value and many times belonging
  - ii. ATTENTION which includes active listening
  - iii. AFFIRMATION specific and with positive recognition
  - iv. AFFECTION genuine and appropriate
  - v. ASSISTANCE extra effort and patience
- f. What's the appropriate RATIO?
  - i. Research has shown that it's necessary 5 positives for one negative!
  - ii. Many people believe this is too much, but for some reason people's minds re-play the negative messages over and over in the heads.
  - iii. Is more than 5:1 better? There is danger also in overdoing it because criticism also helps to grow. At the same time too much praise may seem unreal and you may lose credibility as a GG leader. Lastly, if you never talk about what we can improve, people will settle for less and never grow.
- g. Remember:
  - i. Filling up an emotional tank takes time
  - ii. Always include non-verbal tank fillers: Thumbs up, a smile, a nod, a pat in the back, high five, etc.
  - iii. Use technology! Text messages, Facebook comments, personal email, etc. Even a smiling face, a photo, will work miracles.
  - iv. Bible verses are great tank fillers!
  - v. If you need to fill you own tank try this: take some rest, spend time with trusted friends, watch your diet, exercise, read a good book (the Bible included), spend time with you family, and talk with God about it.

## 6. Communicate

- a. The goal of communication in a growth group is COMMUNITY, and not simply getting the information straight.
- b. People in a group become very frustrated when there is confusing or no communication. If we want to build community and group life, people need to know what is going on.

- c. Jesus demonstrated a variety of communication approaches according to the audience and circumstances. He used storytelling, proclamation, demonstration, riddles, aphorism and penetrating questions.
- d. **Guide your GG to deeper levels of communication**
  - i. Levels of communication:
    - 1. Level one: EVERYDAY talk.
    - 2. Level two: INFORMATION or sharing facts
    - 3. Level three: IDEAS and opinions
    - 4. Level four: FEELINGS. What is really happening inside.
  - ii. As a GG leader it's your responsibility to create an ATMOSPHERE where everyone feels free to share, to be heard and to become a community.
- e. **Communication skills** that can enhance a GG leader SUCCESS (by Judy Hamlin)
  - i. Listening
  - ii. Seeking information and opinions
  - iii. Clarifying
  - iv. Paraphrasing
  - v. Justifying
  - vi. Redirecting
  - vii. Extending
  - viii. Summarizing
  - ix. Affirming
  - x. Being concrete and personal
  - xi. Being personally implicated
  - xii. Handling talkative and silent members
- f. **Communications tips** that build community
  - i. Show that you CARE
  - ii. Always respond ENTHUSIASTICALLY
  - iii. PRAY for your group members
  - iv. Ask about personal LIVES before or after the meeting
  - v. Try to meet PHYSICAL needs
  - vi. Talk about YOUR passion and life
  - vii. Get in contact with people OUTSIDE of the meeting. Do group life
  - viii. Try to find something POSITIVE in everything people tell you.
- g. **Conflicts**
  - i. GG leaders need to see conflict not as something negative, or even destructive for their leadership in the group.
  - ii. Instead choose to see every conflict as an OPPORTUNITY to glorify God (1 Corinthians 10.31).
  - iii. Usual areas of conflict
    - 1. Different EXPECTATIONS

2. PERSONALITIES issues
  3. Different ways of PARTICIPATION
  4. LEADERSHIP styles
- iv. How to approach conflict
    1. Remember to see it and decide it will be an opportunity to glorify God. 1 Corinthians 10.31
    2. Follow BIBLICAL principles.
    3. Remember: "The group that FIGHTS together stays together."
    4. Practical steps
      - a. Recognize the problem
      - b. Pray
      - c. Talk to the person in private and separately
      - d. Get the people to listen to each other
      - e. Include only those who are affected.
  - v. Different opinions help the group GROW and are not a THREAT to your authority or leadership.
  - vi. Take a few minutes and review Appendix 7A - The Peacemaker's Pledge: A Commitment to Biblical Conflict Resolution – (From the book Peacemakers, by Ken Sandy)

## 7. Transparency

- a. Stephen P. Greggo argues that John Wesley's "inspiration for group work came from the epistle of James, known for its practical wisdom in the pursuit of a real-world faith: "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed" (James 5.16). The ingredients of mutual confession, individually targeted prayer and realized healing from the effects of sin were carved into the procedures Wesley authored and circulated to guide the advancement of bands... The healing promised in James accompanies transparency and intercession within an intense interpersonal context."
- b. When a group meets in a church building, groups can very easily take a institutional or classroom feeling, in this setting transparency and warmth can be hindered.
- c. Growth Groups leaders need to open themselves and don't hide their souls behind SUPERIORITY or SUPERFICIALITY.
- d. GG leaders need to remember that God sees who we really are. Remember:
  - i. 2 CORINTHIANS 12:9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will **boast** all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

- ii. HEBREWS 4:13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.
- e. **What's the purpose of transparency?**
  - i. Transparency always has the objective of leading to TRANSFORMATION.
  - ii. Transparency without transformation is SUPERFICIAL
  - iii. It will also help keeping people HUMBLE
  - iv. Open and transparent communication serves also as a tool for ministering to others.
  - v. Transparency creates access doors or paths to people's hearts.
- f. **Simple ways in which to FOSTER transparency in a GG**
  - i. TRUST is built when we make ourselves vulnerable to others.
  - ii. Be the first to share your STORY.
  - iii. Learn to ADMIT your faults in front of the whole group. That includes: for being late, some character traits, lack of organization or delegating, bad temper, etc.
  - iv. Naturally ask the group to forgive you when things don't go as planned.
  - v. Be very careful not to look for excuses for your mistakes. It's always easy to blame others, avoid it.
  - vi. Don't wait until you have a huge PROBLEM to share with the group.
  - vii. Members will be as open and transparent as the leader is willing to be.
  - viii. Share your passions, dreams, hobbies with your GG.
  - ix. DO what you profess to believe.
  - x. Don't ever think that if you share your struggles with your, that they will respect you less, they will instead IDENTIFY better with you and trust you more.
- g. Does GOD want GG leaders to be transparent?
  - i. As we have seen it's God's plan for humans to live in community, and in order to have community you need open relationships. Without transparency and vulnerability, community is greatly HINDERED.
  - ii. Be honest with everyone including your GG
    - 1. In John Wesley's group meetings the most important part was to share the CONDITION of your soul.
    - 2. Meetings dealt with last week's personal experiences.
    - 3. One word summarizes those meetings: TRANSPARENCY
- h. **Sharing our FAULTS with one another**
  - i. There is healing in sharing our weaknesses and sins with one another.
  - ii. Prayer should always follow presenting specific needs.
  - iii. This would help deal with discouragement and dealing with sin
  - iv. How should things be shared?
    - 1. There needs to be knowledge of each one

2. Maintain strict confidentiality within the GG
3. Bear each other burdens
4. Be responsible for one another
5. Don't feel pressure to share every detail of your life with everyone you get to know. But be open enough to be vulnerable

i. **Live HONESTLY before God and people**

- i. Transparency begins with a daily encounter with God where we are honest and transparent about our failures, intentions and spiritual walk.
- ii. Transparency continues throughout the day by practicing His presence.
- iii. Don't ever feel you need to always look good before your GG.
- iv. Allow God to help you in your weaknesses
- v. Remember: God is glorified in our weaknesses.

**8. Listening**

- a. "Dale Carnegie said, 'you can make more FRIENDS in two weeks by becoming a good LISTENER than you can in two years trying to get other people interested in you.' " Dave Earley, *Turning members into leaders*, 53
- b. Why people don't listen? And what to do about it!
  - i. Short ATTENTION SPANS: people say adult attention span is thirty minutes, but statistics show is only 7 seconds! After that time your minds goes away somewhere. Think about how fast scenes change in TV or movies. Pause as you speak and present examples to anchor points.
  - ii. Too many DISTRACTIONS: coughs, side talks, going to restroom, cell phones ring, text message received, and internet browsing! As a GG acknowledge distractions playfully and ask members to put them away.
  - iii. Lack of TRAINING: we have reading and writing courses but not so many listening. Teach people by your example giving full and undivided attention.
  - iv. Language BARRIERS: to some English is second language, or don't know the lingo being used. Use simple vocabulary and adapt to the audience culture. Be careful with the use of Biblical lingo where people can be lost. Ex born again, being saved, gospel, etc.
  - v. Unchecked ASSUMPTIONS: don't assume people have knowledge of certain things. Explain what those things are, how it works, what it means for our days. Ex Prophecies of the Bible, three faces of judgment, millennium, death, etc

- vi. Too many WORRIES: people face too many stressful situations. They might be at the GG meeting but are thinking of picking up the kids, making the list of groceries to buy as soon as they walk out, or trying to figure out how to pay the bills. As a GG leader tell people that even they might be stress out and running with too many things, that still God wants to tell them something tonight.
- vii. No REASON to listen: this is the main reason why people don't listen. People want to know how will I benefit from it. Begin telling people in your group how today's topic will enhance their lives.
- c. How to be better listeners?
  - i. FOCUS on the people speaking
  - ii. Be 100% PRESENT
  - iii. Ask CLARIFYING questions.
  - iv. Look at the person in the EYE
  - v. Practice using "I" messages. Ex. I hear you saying...
  - vi. Don't CUT people while talking, allow them to finish (listen Hispanics!)
  - vii. Don't JUDGE what the other person is saying, simply listen
  - viii. Avoid preparing your RESPONSE while the other is still talking
  - ix. Accept and validate FEELINGS expressed
  - x. Provide REASSURING comments often. Ex. I see, uhh, that must hurt...
  - xi. Repeat to them what you UNDERSTOOD with your own words
  - xii. Be CALM at all times and show you care
- d. With your body give signals of willingness to listen by:
  - i. Having an OPEN body position by not crossing arms, legs
  - ii. Leaning FORWARD showing interest
  - iii. Giving signs of AGREEMENT like nodding or smiling
- e. Listen to non-verbal communication. (Hamlin, Judy. The Small Group Leaders Training Manual . p67). Body language involves as much as 60% of communication.

1. <u>ACTIONS</u>	facial expressions, feet and legs
2. <u>ARTICULATION</u>	inflection, rate, tone, enunciation
3. <u>APPEARANCE</u>	posture, clothing, mannerisms
4. <u>AWARENESS</u>	spacing, attention, response
5. <u>APPOINTMENTS</u>	room size, furnishing
- f. Seek always to UNDERSTAND first, and only then to be UNDERSTOOD.
- g. Don't fall into the trap of ANSWERING your own questions
- h. When doing active listening remember to reflect with your comments the speaker's MEANING, FEELINGS and EMOTIONS.

**Exercise: (7 Minutes)**

- Ask: How good are you listening?
  - Invite students to get in groups of two and the one with more hair speaks first!
  - Speaker: share in 2 minutes your current spiritual struggles.
  - Listener: practice the listening skills we have seen today
  - At the end, the speaker gives feedback on how the listener listened, if the person understood the meaning, feelings, if missed anything.
  - Now repeat the exercise switching roles.
- Conclude this exercise by asking:
  - How did you feel?
  - Any improvement in your communication skills?

**Explain: (5 Minutes)**

- Ask the students to go now to the Appendix material of this session.
- Explain the value of each material.
- Explain what you expect them to do with it.

**9. Appendix review:**

- a. Appendix 7A -The Peacemaker's Pledge: A Commitment to Biblical Conflict Resolution – (From the book Peacemakers, by Ken Sandy)
- b. Appendix 7B - In Relation with One Another: Ellen White – Gospel Workers, Chapter 11, pp. 473-480.
- c. Appendix 7C – People you may have in your GG: adapted from the book by Scott Boren & Tillman, Cell Group Leader Training, Participant's guide, page 95.

**10. Recommended reading:**

- a. Boren, M. S. (2007b). *The relational way: From small group structures to holistic life connections*. Houston, TX: TOUCH Publications.
- b. Boren, M. S. (2011). *MissioRelate: Becoming a church of missional small groups*. Houston, TX: TOUCH Publications.
- c. Sande, K. (1997). *The peacemaker: A biblical guide to resolving personal conflict* (2nd ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books..



## Appendix 7A -The Peacemaker's Pledge: A Commitment to Biblical Conflict Resolution – (From the book Peacemakers, by Ken Sandy)

As people reconciled to God by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we believe that we are called to respond to conflict in a way that is remarkably different from the way the world deals with conflict (Matthew 5.9; Luke 6.27-36; Galatians 5.19-26). We also believe that conflict provides opportunities to glorify God, serve other people, and grow to be like Christ (Romans 8.28-29; 1 Corinthians 10.31-11.1; James 1.2-4). Therefore, in response to God's love and in reliance on his grace, we commit ourselves to respond to conflict according to the following principles:

**Glorify God** — Instead of focusing on our own desires or dwelling on what others may do, we will rejoice in the Lord and bring him praise by depending on his forgiveness, wisdom, power, and love, as we seek to faithfully obey his commands and maintain a loving, merciful, and forgiving attitude. Psalms 37.1-6; Mark 11.25; John 14.15; Romans 12.17-21; 1 Corinthians 10.31; Philippians 4.2-9; Colossians 3.1-4; James 3.17-18; 4.1-3; 1 Peter 2.12.

**Get the Log out of Your Own Eye** — Instead of blaming others for a conflict or resisting correction, we will trust in God's mercy and take responsibility for our own contribution to conflicts—confessing our sins to those we have wronged, asking God to help us change any attitudes and habits that lead to conflict, and seeking to repair any harm we have caused. Proverbs 28.13; Matthew 7.3-5; Luke 19.8; Colossians 3.5-14; 1 John 1.8-9.

**Gently Restore** — Instead of pretending that conflict doesn't exist or talking about others behind their backs, we will overlook minor offenses or we will talk personally and graciously with those whose offenses seem too serious to overlook, seeking to restore them rather than condemn them. When a conflict with a Christian brother or sister cannot be resolved in private, we will ask others in the body of Christ to help us settle the matter in a biblical manner. Proverbs 19.11; Matthew 18.15-20; 1 Corinthians 6.1-8; Galatians 6.1-2; Ephesians 4.29; 2 Timothy 2.24-26; James 5.9.

**Go and be reconciled** — Instead of accepting premature compromise or allowing relationships to wither, we will actively pursue genuine peace and reconciliation—forgiving others as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us, and seeking just and mutually beneficial solutions to our differences. Matthew 5.23-24; 6.12; 7.12; Ephesians 4.1-3, 32; Philippians 2.3-4.

By God's grace, we will apply these principles as a matter of stewardship, realizing that conflict is an assignment, not an accident. We will remember that success in God's eyes is not a matter of specific results, but of faithful, dependent obedience. And we will pray that our service as peacemakers will bring praise to our Lord and lead others to know His infinite love (Matthew 25.14-21; John 13.34-35; Romans 12.18; 1 Peter 2.19; 4.19).

**Appendix 7B - In Relation with One Another:** Ellen White – Gospel Workers,  
Chapter 11, pp. 473-480.

**In Contact with Others**

Every association of life calls for the exercise of self-control, forbearance, and sympathy. We differ so widely in disposition, habits, education, that our ways of looking at things vary. We judge differently. Our understanding of truth, our ideas in regard to the conduct of life, are not in all respects the same. There are no two whose experience is alike in every particular. The trials of one are not the trials of another. The duties that one finds light, are to another most difficult and perplexing. {GW 473.1}

So frail, so ignorant, so liable to misconception is human nature, that each should be careful in the estimate he places upon another. We little know the bearing of our acts upon the experience of others. What we do or say may seem to us of little moment, when, could our eyes be opened, we should see that upon it depended the most important results for good or for evil. {GW 473.2}

**Consideration for Burden-Bearers**

Many have borne so few burdens, their hearts have known so little real anguish, they have felt so little perplexity and distress in behalf of others, that they cannot understand the work of the true burden-bearer. No more capable are they of appreciating his burdens than is the child of understanding the care and toil of his burdened father. The child may wonder at his father's fears and perplexities. These appear needless to him. But when years of experience shall have been added to his life, when he himself comes to bear its burdens, he will look back upon his father's life, and understand that which was once so incomprehensible. Bitter experience has given him knowledge. {GW 473.3}

The work of many a burden-bearer is not understood, his labors are not appreciated, until death lays him low. When others take up the burdens he has laid down, and meet the difficulties he encountered, they can understand how his faith and courage were tested. Often then the mistakes they were so quick to censure are lost sight of. Experience teaches them sympathy. God permits men to be placed in positions of responsibility. When they err, He has power to correct or to remove them. We should be careful not to take into our hands the work of judging that belongs to God. . . . {GW 474.1}

The Saviour bids us, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." [Matthew 7:1, 2.] Remember that soon your life record will pass in review before God. Remember, too, that He has said, "Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: . . . for thou that judgest doest the same things." [Romans 2:1.]

**Forbearance Under Wrong**

We cannot afford to let our spirits chafe over any real or supposed wrong done to ourselves. Self is the enemy we most need to fear. No form of vice has a more baleful effect upon the character than has human passion not under the control of the Holy Spirit. No other victory we can gain will be so precious as the victory gained over self. {GW 475.1}

We should not allow our feelings to be easily wounded. We are to live, not to guard our feelings or our reputation, but to save souls. As we become interested in the salvation of souls, we cease to mind the little differences that so often arise in our association with one another. Whatever

others may think of us, it need not disturb our oneness with Christ, the fellowship of the Spirit. "What glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." [1 Peter 2:20.] {GW 475.2}

Do not retaliate. So far as you can do so, remove all cause for misapprehension. Avoid the appearance of evil. Do all that lies in your power, without the sacrifice of principle, to conciliate others. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." [Matthew 5:23, 24.] {GW 475.3}

If impatient words are spoken to you, never reply in the same spirit. Remember that "a soft answer turneth away wrath." [Proverbs 15:1.] And there is wonderful power in silence. Words spoken in reply to one who is angry sometimes serve only to exasperate; but anger met with silence, in a tender, forbearing spirit, quickly dies away. {GW 475.4}

Under a storm of stinging faultfinding words, keep the mind stayed upon the word of God. Let mind and heart be stored with God's promises. If you are ill-treated or wrongfully accused, instead of returning an angry answer, repeat to yourself the precious promises: {GW 476.1}

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." [Romans 12:21.] {GW 476.2}

"Commit thy way unto the Lord: trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day." [Psalm 37:5, 6.] {GW 476.3}

"There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known." [Luke 12:2.] {GW 476.4}

"Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place." [Psalm 66:12.] {GW 476.5}

We are prone to look to our fellow-men for sympathy and uplifting, instead of looking to Jesus. In His mercy and faithfulness, God often permits those in whom we place confidence to fail us, in order that we may learn the folly of trusting in man, and making flesh our arm. Let us trust fully, humbly, unselfishly, in God. He knows the sorrows that we feel to the depths of our being, but which we cannot express. When all things seem dark and unexplainable, remember the words of Christ, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." [John 13:7.] {GW 476.6}

Study the history of Joseph and of Daniel. The Lord did not prevent the plottings of men who sought to do them harm; but He caused all these devices to work for good to His servants, who amid trial and conflict preserved their faith and loyalty. {GW 477.1}

So long as we are in the world, we shall meet with adverse influences. There will be provocations to test the temper; and it is by meeting these in a right spirit that the Christian graces are developed. If Christ dwells in us, we shall be patient, kind, and forbearing, cheerful amid frets and irritations. Day by day and year by year we shall conquer self, and grow into a noble heroism. This is our allotted task; but it cannot be accomplished without help from Jesus, resolute decision, unwavering purpose, continual watchfulness, and unceasing prayer. Each one has a personal battle to fight. Not even God can make our characters noble or our lives useful, unless we become co-workers with Him. Those who decline the struggle lose the strength and joy of victory. {GW 477.2}

We need not keep our own record of trials and difficulties, griefs, and sorrows. All these things are written in the books, and heaven will take care of them. While we are counting up the disagreeable things, many things that are pleasing to reflect upon are passing from memory;

such as the merciful kindness of God surrounding us every moment, and the love over which angels marvel, that God gave His Son to die for us. If as workers for Christ you feel that you have had greater cares and trials than have fallen to the lot of others, remember that for you there is a peace unknown to those who shun these burdens.

There is comfort and joy in the service of Christ. Let the world see that life with Him is no failure. {GW 477.3}

If you do not feel light-hearted and joyous, do not talk of your feelings. Cast no shadow upon the lives of others. A cold, sunless religion never draws souls to Christ. It drives them away from Him, into the nets that Satan has spread for the feet of the straying. Instead of thinking of your discouragements, think of the power you can claim in Christ's name. Let your imagination take hold upon things unseen. Let your thoughts be directed to the evidences of the great love of God for you. Faith can endure trial, resist temptation, bear up under disappointment. Jesus lives as our advocate. All is ours that His mediation secures. {GW 478.1}

Think you not that Christ values those who live wholly for Him? Think you not that He visits those who, like the beloved John in exile, are for His sake in hard and trying places? God will not suffer one of His true-hearted workers to be left alone, to struggle against great odds and be overcome. He preserves as a precious jewel every one whose life is hid with Christ in Him. Of every such one He says: "I . . . will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee." [Haggai 2:23.] {GW 478.2}

Then talk of the promises; talk of Jesus' willingness to bless. He does not forget us for one brief moment. When, notwithstanding disagreeable circumstances, we rest confidently in His love and shut ourselves in with Him, the sense of His presence will inspire a deep, tranquil joy. Of Himself Christ said: "I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things. And He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." [John 8:28, 29.] {GW 478.3}

Cultivate the habit of speaking well of others. Dwell upon the good qualities of those with whom you associate, and see as little as possible of their errors and failings. When tempted to complain of what some one has said or done, praise something in that person's life or character. Cultivate thankfulness. Praise God for His wonderful love in giving Christ to die for us. It never pays to think of our grievances. God calls upon us to think of His mercy and His matchless love, that we may be inspired with praise. {GW 479.1}

Earnest workers have no time for dwelling upon the faults of others. We cannot afford to live on the husks of others' faults or failings. Evil-speaking is a twofold curse, falling more heavily upon the speaker than upon the hearer. He who scatters the seeds of dissension and strife, reaps in his own soul the deadly fruits. The very act of looking for evil in others develops evil in those who look. By dwelling upon the faults of others, we are changed into the same image. But by beholding Jesus, talking of His love and perfection of character, we become changed into His image. By contemplating the lofty ideal He has placed before us, we shall be uplifted into a pure and holy atmosphere, even the presence of God. When we abide here, there goes forth from us a light that irradiates all who are connected with us. {GW 479.2}

Instead of criticizing and condemning others, say, "I must work out my own salvation. If I co-operate with Him who desires to save my soul, I must watch myself diligently. I must put away every evil from my life. I must overcome every fault. I must become a new creature in Christ. Then, instead of weakening those who are striving against evil, I can strengthen them by encouraging words." {GW 479.3}

We are too indifferent in regard to one another. Too often we forget that our fellow-laborers are in need of strength and cheer. Take care to assure them of your interest and sympathy. Help them by your prayers, and let them know that you do it.--"Ministry of Healing," pages 483-493. All who profess to be children of God should bear in mind that as missionaries they will be brought into contact with all classes of minds. There are the refined and the coarse, the humble and the proud, the religious and the skeptical, the educated and the ignorant, the rich and the poor. These varied minds cannot be treated alike; yet all need kindness and sympathy. By mutual contact our minds should receive polish and refinement. We are dependent upon one another, closely bound together by the ties of human brotherhood. . . . {GW 480.2}

It is through the social relations that Christianity comes in contact with the world. Every man or woman who has received the divine illumination is to shed light on the dark pathway of those who are unacquainted with the better way. Social power, sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, must be improved in bringing souls to the Saviour. Christ is not to be hid away in the heart as a coveted treasure, sacred and sweet, to be enjoyed solely by the possessor. We are to have Christ in us as a well of water, springing up into everlasting life, refreshing all who come in contact with us. " Ministry of Healing," pages 495, 496. [481] {GW 480.3}

**Appendix 7C – People you may have in your GG:** adapted from the book by  
Scott Boren & Tillman, Cell Group Leader Training, Participant's guide,  
page 95.

Take a closer look at the graph below and imagine this is your group.

1. Who would be the hardest three people for you to deal with and why?
2. What could you do to help those three people have a healthy participation in the group meeting?
3. Share your comments and reflections with your accountability partner and be ready to discuss it with the rest of the GG training students.



### **Question and Answers: (5 Minutes)**

- Give time for students to ask questions and provide simple answers.
- Remind everyone that instructors will be available after the session if they have further questions or comments

### **Review the Practicum: (5 Minutes)**

- Review where each one should be at this point.
- Mention what they need to turn in today as it was explained in the previous session
- Emphasize what they need to do for next week's meeting.
- Explain also what to do if you have fallen behind

### **Remind of next week's meeting (2 minutes)**

- Remind people at what time the next training will begin and ask them to be on time!
- Remind of the place of the next training.
- Remind also the materials they need to bring to class

### **Vision Sharing (3 minutes)**

- Share a story that will illustrate community in Growth Groups
- Remind the GG vision:
  - The vision of our GG is to create a movement of groups that will help each person reach those in their circle of influence, help people grow into mature disciples of Jesus and be ready for his second coming

### **Prayer**

- End the training with prayer.

# GG Leadership Development Program

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



## **Session # 8 – Make Disciples (to DO)**

### ***Objective of session # 8:***

1. Help students to adopt a more Biblical view of evangelism.
2. Challenge each one to be a 24/7 missionary and to live on mission
3. Invite students to help others become missionaries for Christ

### ***Materials needed for session:***

1. Bible, GG student manual, white board and markers, pencils and papers.
2. Computer, projector and PPT
3. Download in advance the video “Worst evangelism ever”  
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9iA6K7mtoE>)

***Suggested time for this session:*** 90 minutes

### ***Optional additional materials for the instructor:***

1. Jacobsen, R. (2008). *Bridges 101: Gas pumps, banana bread, and other attitudes*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association.
2. Norman, B. (2003). *Bridging the gap: reaching the internet generation : an evangelistic strategy for reaching the postmodern generation*, Lincoln, NE: AdventSource.
3. Sjogren, S. (2001). *101 ways to reach your community*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.
4. The end of the spear - DVD

### ***Today's program: Session # 8***

1. Welcome and prayer
2. Thanksgiving: talk about how much you appreciate the students commitment to the training program
3. Review of today's session program: Briefly explain today's program
  - Introduction exercise
  - Study of session (fill in the blanks, exercises, discussion in groups, etc.)
  - Question and answers
  - Practicum's follow up: Homework!
  - Prayer
4. Introductory exercise
5. Study of Session # 8
6. Time for questions and answers
7. Practicum's follow up: Homework!
8. Vision Sharing: share how making disciples of Jesus fulfills the mission received from Christ, and how Growth Groups greatly help in reaching our circle of influences.
9. Prayer



## **Session # 8 – Make Disciples (to DO)**

### ***Introductory exercise: (5 minutes)***

1. Show the video “worst evangelism ever” – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9iA6K7mtoE> (or you can ask your youth to prepare one following their own ideas or the ideas on the video!) – Remember to download it and save it before!
2. After the video: ask “So, what do you think? Would this work here? Of course it’s a joke, but sometimes some Christians are very close to it!

***Transition (you may say):*** I believe there are better ways in which to help people become followers of Jesus Christ. So today we will begin from the beginning. Reading the passage that defines the mission we have. Let’s read Matthew 28:19,20...

### **1. Key Passage: MATTHEW 28.19-20**

### **2. The WHY in evangelism**

- a. There are many great reasons why we need to be involved in evangelism. Prayerfully consider the following Biblical reasons:
  - i. The great CONTROVERSY. Revelation 12.9
  - ii. The great LOVE. John 3.16
  - iii. The great COMMISSION. Matthew 28.19
  - iv. The great CALLING. 2 Corinthians 5.20
  - v. The great danger for all human beings.
    1. All people have sinned and deserve to die. Romans 6.23; 3.23
    2. People are lost and in need of a Savior. Luke 19.10
  - vi. The great danger for believers. 1 Corinthians 9.16; Ezekiel 33.7-9
  - vii. The great Savior. Only Jesus can save humans. He is the only way. 1 Timothy 2.5
  - viii. The great command. Matthew 22.37, 38 ... Love God and neighbor!
- b. Certainly God is interested in the salvation of all human being of all nations, tribes and tongues.
- c. Jesus incarnation, life, death and resurrection proves His interest in saving humanity.

### **3. The WHAT in evangelism**

- a. **What are we to ACCOMPLISH in evangelism, in leading someone to Christ?**
  - i. What’s the goal?
    1. To finish 26 Bible Studies
    2. To have them attend church every Sabbath
    3. To baptize them
    4. To have them know all prophecies

5. To stop eating unhealthy foods
6. To obey all God's commandments
7. Others: \_\_\_\_\_

- ii. According to Matthew 28:19 the goal is to 'make disciples', not just going, teaching, and baptizing, but making fully committed followers of Jesus.
- iii. Our Goal should be: to lead the person to be a JOYFUL disciple that really LOVES, OBEYS and MAKES more disciples of Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20)

**b. What is evangelism? False perceptions in evangelism**

- i. For some reason evangelism is no longer a synonym of good news for church members (in Greek evangelism means good news).
- ii. Furthermore, Rebecca Pippert argues that "Christians and non-Christians have one thing in common: they both HATE evangelism."
- iii. In some places, there is also a tendency to divorce evangelism from discipleship.
- iv. Neil Cole believes that "we have committed and illegitimate DIVORCE! When we separate "evangelism" from "discipleship" we are separating that which God has joined together! ... They are two wings of the same plane and "You can't fly without both. When they are separated we are destined to crash and burn." (Cultivating a life for God, 81)

**c. Evangelism redefined**

- i. When we do evangelism we are actually giving and an invitation to join a new family, God's family, the redeemed family, of which we have become part when we accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord!
- ii. INCARNATIONAL evangelism - Evangelism as a LIFESTYLE
  1. "For too long, evangelism has centered in events and not on a lifestyle of sharing His love with people we see every day." (*Reaching college students through cells*, 36)
- ii. Danger in evangelism as lifestyle
  1. Some may think that they don't need to do anything, that their example will be all people need to know Jesus.
  2. But words are necessary, Bible studies are crucial in helping people get to know the Jesus they have seen in us.
  3. In order to make disciples Christians need to decide to influence their friends so they can also become followers of Jesus. There is praying, going out of our way, and spending lots of time in order to help someone get to know the Savior.
- iii. Evangelism is about building relationships that will bring people one step closer to God. Instead of a one-time event, evangelism is a lifestyle.

#### 4. The WHO in evangelism

- a. How many Christians are really making more disciples?
  - i. Leonard Sweet shares “of an executive of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board who stated that 92 percent of Southern Baptists will die having never shared their faith in Jesus with another person.” (The Relational Way, 122)
  - ii. George Barna presents some disturbing figures about how many teens are actually sharing Christ in America. He writes:

“The most striking decrease was in the area of evangelism; the percentage of teens who had witnessed to someone in the past year declined from 63% in 1997 to 45% in 2009. Interestingly, 13- to 17-year-old Protestants and non-denominational evangelicals are even more likely to pray, attend worship services, read the Bible and attend youth groups than in the past, but their likelihood of witnessing declined equally with the other denominations. (Barna Research Group, 7/12/10)
  - iii. Monte Sahlin wrote in 2003 that as the “Adventist faith enters the 21 century; the risk that self-centered religion will become DOMINANT as the Church struggles to keep missional goals clear and strong”.

#### Exercise: (7 minutes)

- Divide the students in groups of 4 people and ask them to respond:
- Why do you think so many young Adventists are not leading others to Christ? Discuss and agree with your group which are the three most important reasons. (Give them 4 minutes.
- Potential reasons:
  - They feel embarrassed or even afraid
  - They don't think it's important
  - They don't know Christ personally
  - They don't know where to find Him
  - Are not willing to pay the price
  - They don't know how
  - They think someone might laugh at them
- Ask some of them to share their top three

- b. Myths why people don't evangelize
  - i. “I don't know the APOLOGETICS”
    1. Members believe they need to know everything from Bible
    2. Answering non-believers questions may help
  - ii. “I need TRAINING”
    1. Neil Cole answers this myth when he writes “we have assumed that it is training that is needed, but we have found that training does not overcome the barriers that keep Christians from sharing the Gospel... “When people become connected to God

by the Holy Spirit, they become witnesses (Acts 1:8)... They ask for training later on, when they are praying and trying to save a friend.... (*Cultivating a Life for God*, 85)

- iii. "No good PROGRAMS or events to which to invite!"
  - 1. This is the come and see paradigm of evangelism in which people believe they only need to invite someone to a program at church. So what it's needed is more attractive/appropriate programs.
  - 2. Under this paradigm people don't see the need to become the carriers of the good news, they have not understood the call to be 24/7 missionaries for the kingdom of God.
- iv. "Evangelism is only for a few"
  - 1. Is evangelism a spiritual gift only for a few?
    - a. Pastor David Cho from Korea, argues that only **10%** of people in the congregation have the gift of evangelism. He also believes that this is the most important gift for a group leader to succeed.
    - b. For Peter Wagner the gift of evangelism "is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to share the gospel with unbelievers in such a way that men and women become Jesus' disciples and responsible members of the Body of Christ"
  - 2. Evangelism is not just a spiritual gift for a few
    - a. Ed Stetzed argues that there is "no such thing as 'the gift of evangelism'"
    - b. It seems that many people in our days are arguing that they don't have the gift of evangelism and as a consequence, that it is not their responsibility to do evangelism.
    - c. In the 1990's about 10% of people in the churches in America believe they had the gift of evangelism.
    - d. But according to a Barna research in 2009 they found that "Since 1995, the proportion of born again adults claiming the gift of evangelism dropped from **4%** to **1%**."
    - e. The problem is not that God is giving less people the 'gift of evangelism' in our days, it's that people don't feel the responsibility and honestly don't want to pay the price of doing it.
  - 3. Evangelism is a call to ALL BELIEVERS
    - a. Read 2 Corinthians 5:18 - Clearly all believers are given the ministry of reconciliation, not just 10 or 5% of the congregation!

- b. Read Matthew 28.19 – Jesus expects all of his disciples to make more disciples, not just 10 percent of them!
    - c. Read 2 Timothy 4:5 – Here Timothy is urged to do evangelistic work.
    - d. Ephesians 4.11 – God has given some people the gift to be evangelists, so they can help the rest of the church fulfill their duty of doing evangelism.
  - 4. All true disciples are called to be MISSIONARIES:
    - a. Ellen G. White argues that **“EVERY true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a MISSIONARY”**
    - b. Did the professed believers in the truth live the truth, they would today ALL be missionaries. Some would be working in the islands of the sea; some, in the different countries of the world. Some would be serving Christ as HOME missionaries. Not all are called upon to go abroad. Some may be successful in business lines, and in this work they may represent Christ. They may show to the world that business may be conducted on righteous principles, in strict fidelity to the truth. There may be Christian lawyers, Christian physicians, Christian merchants. Christ may be represented in all lawful callings.—Manuscript 19, 1900.
- c. Why people don’t share Christ and make more disciples?
  - i. A study among Christian student leaders in 1997 (published in the book *Student leadership training manual for youth workers*, 17) revealed why they weren’t leading others to Christ:
    - 1. 42.9% personal fears
    - 2. 33.8% busy schedules
    - 3. 10.6% lack of training
  - ii. You can’t give what you don’t HAVE!
    - 1. Chuck Colson said “you can’t export what you dont have.”
    - 2. Henry Blackaby says: “Knowing God does not come through a program, a study or a method. Knowing God comes through a relationship with a Person. This is an intimate love relationship with God. Through this relationship, God reveals Himself, His purposes, and His ways; and He invites you to JOIN HIM where He is already at work.” (*Experiencing God*, 2).
    - 3. Ellen G. White wrote: “Without a living faith in Christ as a personal Saviour it is impossible to make our influence felt in a skeptical world. We cannot give to others that which we do not ourselves possess. It is in PROPORTION to our own devotion and consecration to Christ that we exert an influence for the

blessing and uplifting of mankind. If there is no actual service, no genuine love, no reality of experience, there is no power to help, no connection with heaven, no savor of Christ in the life.” (Mount of Blessing, 37)

iii. No willingness to pay the **PRICE**

1. It would interrupt with our interests and business! Ellen G. White wrote: “All will not be called to go to foreign missions, but you may be missionaries at home in your own families and in your neighborhoods. There is work for you to do for God that you do not see and do not feel, because you have not wanted to see, and know, and do, because your worldly interests and your arrangements in business would be INTERRUPTED. {ST, September 4, 1879 par. 17}
2. The need for hard work. Miguel Cerna wrote “But no great achievement comes easily. Nothing worth having is cheap. And the more you pay for what you have, the more you appreciate it. ... Unless the church and its leader are willing to pay this price, MEDIOCRITY will continue and there will be no great achievements in soul-winning.” (*The Power of Small Groups in the Church*, 135, 136)
3. Be willing to pay the price involves: Spend lots of time: with the person you are leading and with Christ. To be patient, and wait (Galatians 6.9). And also to investigate and study

iv. No sense of **URGENCY** and of the coming danger

1. Ellen G. White writes: “Time is short. Workers for Christ are needed everywhere. There should be one hundred earnest, faithful laborers in home and foreign mission fields where now there is one. The highways and the byways are yet unworked. Urgent inducements should be held out to those who ought now to be engaged in missionary work for the Master.” (*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 488)
2. White writes: “We do not understand as we should the great conflict going on between invisible agencies, the controversy between loyal and disloyal angels. Over every man, good and evil angels strive. This is no make-believe conflict. It is no mimic battle in which we are engaged. We have to meet most powerful adversaries, and it rests with us to determine which shall win. We are to find our strength where the early disciples found theirs”. (The Signs of the Times, February 17, 1914)

d. The **POTENTIAL** of every disciple:

- i. John Maxwell argues that “even the shyest of people will influence at least 10,000 others during their lifetime.”

- ii. Can you imagine the potential if every Christian will influence/lead only one person per year for Christ?
- e. **Who are the best people to work for?**
  - i. The Oikos factor: The word 'oikos' in Greek means HOUSEHOLD and is used to refer to those close to us, our friends, family, co-workers, neighbors and all those we share an activity or hobby.
  - ii. Research has shown that a person hears the gospel SEVEN times before responding to it.
  - iii. According to Herb Miller the difference between growing and non-growing churches is "INVITE". He adds "No amount of theological expressions from the pulpit can overcome a lack of invitational expression from the pews.
  - iv. Reaching those divinely appointed to you
    1. God has been working AHEAD of you in reaching those around you
    2. Be aware of the RESPONSIBILITY God has place on you to reach those in contact with you.
    3. Our RELATIONSHIPS are the best field for outreach.
  - v. Discover your circle of influence
    1. See the circle of INFLUENCE and do the exercise: (see Appendix 8A)
    2. We ALL have influences on: Family, Friendships, Acquaintances
    3. Jesus said, "Go HOME to your own people. Tell them your story-what the Master did, how he had mercy on you." Mark 5:19 (The Message)
    4. Select 5 PEOPLE with whom you want to share Christ with during this year.

**Exercise: (5 minutes)**

- Ask students complete the exercise in Appendix 8A writing down the names in each corresponding circle of those who don't know the Adventist Message. Give 3 minutes
- Now ask the students to select (from those names in their list) two people they want to see dead at the end of this month.
- NOTE: students may react in very different ways to your request, just look at them seriously and ask them to complete the assignment.
- After some seconds of silence ask: why didn't you mark two names? Mark those you don't know....
- Ask: why you didn't do it?
- Now ask: how many of you believe that if the only way for people to be saved is through Jesus Christ? Raise your hands

please.

- Well, if you don't do anything for those names in your list you are actually saying to them, if you died by the end of this month, I don't really care!
- So now, and this time seriously, circle the names of five people for which you want to work this year and bring them to become fully devoted disciples of Jesus. (Give 1 minute)
- Ask: what did we learn from this exercise?

## 5. The HOW in evangelism

- f. Different ways people do evangelism:
  - i. Place a yard sign inviting people to your church or small group
  - ii. Knocking on doors
  - iii. Corner street preaching
  - iv. Handbills with the message: "You're invited to a Bible study In our home. We'll be studying the book of Revelation. This is the last book of the Bible, with a special message for us today. We hope that you will join us. Our Address... Day... Time... Phone..."
  - v. They still have some results... but, is there is a better way?
- g. Evangelistic methods that cause FEAR
  - i. For the 'conversion' of the indigenous people in Misiones, Argentina, the Jesuits in the 1800's used a big painting where hell was vividly portrayed with people burning and demons inflicting more sufferings upon them. They were giving the choice of converting or burning in hell!
  - ii. Jonathan Edwards' sermon preached on July 8, 1741 in Enfield, Connecticut, titled 'Sinners in the hands of an angry God' also used fear in order to bring conversions..
  - iii. More recently, while talking about the flyer to send to people's houses as advertisement for the upcoming Evangelistic series, the Adventist evangelist said: 'Put as many beast and as ugly as possible'! They were advertising End time conferences with a study on Revelation!
- h. FORCED evangelism:
  - i. Scott Boren argues that most people see Evangelism as "knocking on a stranger's door, passing out tracts, crusades, Billy Graham, or Christian programming on television"
  - ii. He also mentions that by these methods people feel "pressured, uncomfortable, awkward, manipulative" (*The relational way*, 123)
- i. ATTRACTIONAL evangelism - The come and see paradigm:
  - i. Under the come and see paradigm people in church believe the only thing they need to do is to invite.



- ii. So what is needed, they reason, is good programs at church to which people can be invited.
  - iii. People don't see the need of becoming themselves the carriers of the good news and new life found only in Christ.
- j. The real Jesus mandate:
  - i. In Matthew 28.19 Jesus says "go and make disciples of all nations". At least that's the way most translations put it. In the original Greek for this verse there is only one verb in the imperative, that is 'MAKE DISCIPLES' (μαθητεύσατε) while all the other verbs are participles. So, it should be translated "AS YOU GO (or 'while going'), make disciples of all nations."
  - ii. The command by Jesus simply means that we need to make disciples as we go living life!
  - iii. Scott Boren argues that "evangelism, then, is not something we do; it should be something that flows out of our lives as we move through life with others... to participate in evangelism is to share the good news with those in our lives." (The Relational Way, 124).
  - iv. There is a great need today for returning to a relational way of doing evangelism.
- k. Best methods for making disciples
  - i. Jesus commanded his followers to make disciples out of all nations. For this reason, he didn't want his disciples to ISOLATE themselves from the world.
  - ii. In Matthew 28.19 the only verb in imperative is 'MAKE DISCIPLES,' the others simply indicate how to do it 'as you go', teaching, baptizing.
  - iii. Research indicates that 70 to 90% of people come to Jesus by relational evangelism.
  - iv. A good GG leader will constantly remind members to DEVELOP relationships with their friends, those who don't know Jesus.
  - v. Pastor Cho reminds his group leaders "don't tell people about Jesus Christ right away when you meet them. First VISIT them and become their friend, SUPPLY their needs and LOVE them." He argues that people will ask why you do it and you will have the opportunity to say because we love you as God loves you...
- l. Jesus method for making disciples:
  - i. Ellen White wrote: "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour MINGLED with men as one who desired their GOOD. He showed His SYMPATHY for them, MINISTERED to their needs, and won their CONFIDENCE. Then He bade them, "Follow Me."--MH 143.
  - ii. Note the key factors:
    - 1. Mingled: we need to become one with the people, live among them. They are your God given people.
    - 2. Desired their good: the intention matters.

3. Showed sympathy: there are too many Christian with horse faces!
4. Ministered to their needs: help solve problems, needs, do meaningful things for your people.
5. Won their confidence: winning the heart is the door for spiritual transformation and leading them to Christ. They need to fully trust you.
6. Invite 'Follow me': there is a point where you have to gently invite them to get to know Jesus, and become His follower.
7. NOTE: only this method will give true success!

m. **What to study with someone you want to help to become a disciple?**

Discuss and study together the following themes

- i. Who is CHRIST? Suggestions:
  1. Read together the gospel of John (plan: 3 chapters a day, in one week it's done!)
  2. Study His MISSION
  3. Study the Messianic prophecies
  4. Study Christ's nature: fully man and God
  5. Other possible resources: Watch together a movie about Christ as the gospel according to Matthew, Luke, or John.
- ii. What do I GAIN? What is Christ offering me? What's the difference?
  1. Infallible guide: the Bible as ultimate source of truth for us
  2. Identity clarified: Who am I according to Christ?
  3. Clear purpose and meaning for life: Study God's purpose for us.
  4. Real joy & abundant life: Review the Christian advantage of living and dying with Christ
  5. Eternal life: Consider eternal consequences
- iii. What did he TEACH?
  1. Where to find his real teachings? Study the role and importance of the Bible.
  2. Main doctrines such as: sin, prayer, faith, second coming, commandments, judgment, death, millennium, new earth, etc.
  3. Resources:
    - a. If you haven't yet, give Him a Bible
    - b. Present him as a gift the book "The Desire of Ages"
- iv. What is He EXPECTING from me?
  1. Study together what it means to love Him, fear Him, to be a disciple, the Christian life, witnessing, obedience, etc.
  2. Resources:
    - a. Give him a copy and read "Steps to Christ"

- b. Challenge him to start a plan to read whole Bible in one year, give him a copy of a plan to do it.
  - v. How to have a personal RELATIONSHIP with Jesus?
    - 1. Study and practice together how to have personal devotion
    - 2. Study and practice the spiritual disciplines (Bible study, prayer, meditation, fasting, journaling, etc.)
- n. **Lessons on making disciples from Phillip in Acts 8.26-40**
  - i. Listen to God. Acts 8.26
  - ii. Obey God on how to do it, if He tells you run! Acts 8.30
  - iii. Get close to people. Acts 8.29
  - iv. Ask good bridge questions. Acts 8.30
  - v. Accept invitations. Acts 8.31
  - vi. Begin where they are. Acts 8.35
  - vii. Center everything on Jesus. Acts 8.35
  - viii. Challenge people to commit. Acts 8.37
  - ix. Teach them to happily walk by themselves. Acts 8.39
  - x. Repeat joyfully Acts 8.40
- o. Determine how FAR is the person from Christ.
  - i. James Engel scales helps to evaluate the stages towards a decision for Christ.
  - ii. Pause for a minute and think how far are the people who you would love to lead to Christ.
  - iii. The method to follow will depend on the STAGE the person is at.
    - +6 Reproduction
    - +5 Stewardship
    - +4 Communion with God
    - +3 Conceptual and behavioral growth
    - +2 Incorporation into body
    - +1 Post-decision evaluation
    - 0 New Creature
    - 1 Repentance and faith in Christ
    - 2 Decision to act
    - 3 Personal problem recognition
    - 4 Positive attitude towards gospel
    - 5 Grasp of implication of gospel
    - 6 Awareness of fundamentals of gospel
    - 7 Initial awareness of gospel
    - 8 Awareness of Supreme Being but no effective knowledge of Gospel
  - iv. Redundancy of contact is the best to do it.
  - v. George Hunter believes that “non-Christians need between twelve and twenty ‘gospel touches’ to move along the Engel scale to the point of

receiving Christ.” This means exposure to more than one Christian.  
(Quoted by Scott Boren, *The Relational Way*, 140)

p. **How to do it:** (a simple plan)

i. Follow the BABY steps for sharing Christ

1. TELL your friend you are a Christian.
2. SHARE with him why you are a Christian
3. TELL him how you became a Christian.
4. INVITE him to know Christ through the Bible
5. INVITE him to an appropriate program at church – GG!

ii. **Tell YOUR story** (See Appendix 8B): Example: Paul’s testimony, Acts 26:1-29 (there is another one in Acts 22:3-21, but without an invitation)

- |                      |               |
|----------------------|---------------|
| a. <u>BEFORE</u>     | Acts 26:1-11  |
| b. <u>CONVERSION</u> | Acts 26:12-18 |
| c. <u>AFTER</u>      | Acts 26:19-23 |
| d. <u>INVITATION</u> | Acts 26:27-29 |

**Exercise:** (10 minutes)

- Ask students to write their own story in Appendix 8B. Give 5 minutes
- Ask students to pair up with another student and take turns to share their testimony in 2 minutes
- Ask, how does it feel? What did you learn? What can you improve?

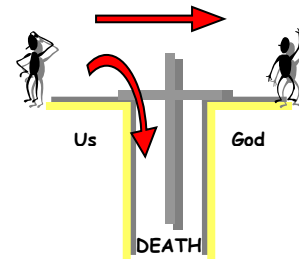
iii. **Tell HIS story:** Review the four most important elements and then practice it!

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. <u>GOD</u>         | is the Creator, is loving, holy, and just  |
| 2. <u>US</u>          | we were created perfect, but became sinful by our choice, we deserve death, and we are spiritually helpless                    |
| 3. <u>CHRIST</u>      | is God, and became also a man, is perfect and without any sin, he died as our substitute, and offers his forgiveness as a gift |
| 4. <u>YOU &amp; I</u> | must respond, ask Christ to be our forgiver and Master, the result is spiritual transformation, obedience and a new life       |

iv. **The BRIDGE illustration**

1. When working with Muslims, you should replace the cross with a simple bridge.

## 2. Do it step by step explaining the essence of the gospel



### q. Evangelism with postmodernists

#### i. Postmodern mindset and evangelism

1. Bruce Norman argues that “because postmodern thinking focuses on the individual and his or her relationships with other individuals, postmodern evangelists methodology must incorporate personal experience, relationship building, and individual spirituality. Hence, postmodern thinking evangelists use what is called ‘RELATIONAL PERSUASION.’”

#### ii. Purpose of postmodern small groups

1. Norman explains that “the primary purpose of small interactive groups is to create a sense of FAMILY involvement. This is an experience that most postmodern persons have been denied, for the most part, in their own families.”

#### iii. Postmodernists need of small group evangelism

1. The same author adds that “significantly, participation in a small group establishes a long term relationship between the church and the postmodern person who may eventually join the church. The relationship begins long before actual integration into the church family. This is important because postmodern thinkers who come into the church will not be willing to STAY unless they have developed such relationships with individuals in the church.”

### r. Learn to practice group evangelism

#### i. Evangelism must be the main PURPOSE of your GG:

1. There are some small group book writers who have argued that “groups complement the work of assimilation, not evangelism” (Searcy N. & Thomas, K., 2008)
2. The reality is that groups do evangelism according to the model of groups they follow. Many have groups as a tool for assimilation (N. Searcy), for maturity, holiness, and edification (John Wesley and many others), pastoral care, etc.
3. Pastor David Paul Cho argues that “there is only one way that the home cell group system will be successful in a church, if that system is to be used as a TOOL of evangelism.” (*Successful home cell groups*. Plainfield, NJ: Logos International. 107)

4. Prolific small group writer Joel Comiskey says that “each cell is a GUERRILLA TEAM to reach the lost.” (*Home cell group explosion*, 54)
- ii. Evangelism in a GG needs to be a TEAM effort.
  1. Instead of using a pole for fishing men, the group utilizes a NET.
  2. “Our PRODUCTIVITY is far greater together than alone.”
  3. The group needs to be persistent! Larry Stockstill argues that “it takes an average of SEVEN contacts to get a person to a cell group.”
- iii. STEPS to reach out
  1. Each one targets one
  2. Each one commits to initiate contact
  3. Share at group meetings the advance
  4. The group needs to pray for them. Make sure you include them in the blessing list.
  5. Plan a neutral group function (Matthew party, picnic, etc)
  6. Invite people to get to know Jesus and study His teachings in the Bible
  7. Have a harvest event.
  8. Invite and keep inviting contacts to harvest event
- iv. Attractional vs Incarnational evangelism
  1. Under the attractional model of evangelism many groups use the approach of “come and see” when inviting people to their meetings. This is attractional. This only works with seekers. They think if we do SG right they will come!
  2. Under the incarnational model GG “take Christ to those in need. It sends the group outside the meeting to meet people on their turf. Instead of asking people to “come and see,” such groups “go and show” (Scott Boren, *The relational way*, 125)
- v. Practice the PRESENCE of Jesus in the group
  1. Be aware that the presence of Christ among members of the group can be one of the strongest reasons for people to come back, get to know Jesus, study the Bible and become disciples of Jesus.
  2. Remember that Jesus said “...and surely I’m with you always..” Matthew 28.20
- vi. UNITY as evangelism
  1. When people who don’t know Christ see His followers in unity, growing in community and loving each other that becomes the greatest apologetic to become themselves a follower.
  2. It’s our relationships with each other what finally convinces the world of the superiority and need of Jesus in their lives.

3. The unity and TRANSPARENCY of the members will attract others to Christ.
- vii. Contact with GG visitors:
    1. When someone visits your GG make sure to call him later, send him a card by mail or an email card.
    2. The point is, show them that you and your group cares for them
    3. Joel Comiskey emphasizes this by concluding: "If you want your cell to grow and multiply, one vital key to effective cell evangelism is IMMEDIATE contact of visitors.
  - viii. Creative ideas for inviting non-Christians
    1. Have a BARBEQUE
    2. Have the group MEETING at the home of the member who will invite a non- believer.
    3. Hold an ICEBREAKER night, with group games.
    4. Show the JESUS video
    5. View parts of a secular video that lends itself to ETERNAL questions
    6. Plan an OUTING as a group, like group ride bike, a hike, canoeing, etc.
    7. PLAY together: volleyball, soccer, tennis, etc
    8. Invite people to special EVENTS (dramas, special programs, concerts, etc)
    9. Look around in CHURCH, there might be someone new that needs to be invited!
    10. Constantly PRAY for non-believers: the empty chair prayer, prayer partners, prayer walking, creating a blessing list.
    11. Learn to DEVELOP new relationships: visit places where you can meet people, have a friendly attitude, set time apart, share hobbies, due favor and ask for favors.
  - ix. Evangelism and active kindness in your GG
    1. Christian writer Sjogren describes active kindness as 'demonstrating God's love by offering to do humble acts of service, in Christ's name, with no STRINGS ATTACHED.'
    2. He further adds: "People don't necessarily remember what they are told of God's love, but they never forget what they have experienced of God's love."
    3. Examples of active kindness that you can practice with your GG
      - a. Free car wash, no donations accepted!
      - b. Giving away cold drinks on a hot day at a park
      - c. Washing car windows at an intersection
      - d. Blessing needy families with bags of groceries
      - e. Raking leaves or snow for neighbors
      - f. Cleaning restroom at local businesses

4. Don't forget: When doing these acts of kindness people will ask 'why are you doing this?' Make sure to instruct your GG people to respond:
    - a. 'we simply do this because we want to show God's love in a PRACTICAL WAY'
    - b. 'because God loves you, and we love you too'!
  5. See Appendix 8D – 101 acts of kindness – (from the book 101 ways to reach your community, by Steve Sjogren) for more ideas
- x. CONNECT your GG meeting to the church worship services
1. Some groups have problems connecting their GG life with the life of their local church
  2. Make sure:
    - a. Your GG understands that the evangelizing process of making disciples is not over until the person is baptized and participating in the local church
    - b. Your group invites GG visitors to the church worship services on Sabbath.
    - c. Offer the visitor to pick them up, to walk together to church. This will greatly help them.
    - d. Make pertinent announcements about the normal function of the church at the end of the GG meeting.
    - e. Always mention that GG are an integral part of the bigger church in this area.
  3. Invite everyone in the GG to sit together one Sabbath at worship service.
- s. Matthew Parties:
- i. What is a Matthew Party?
    1. In Luke 5.29 Matthew Levi, invites his friends to a feast where they would be able to meet and talk to Jesus. It was a party which main goal was to serve the KINGDOM of God.
    2. Matthew parties are social events that are attended by Christians and non-Christians that have the purpose of getting to know each other in love. This is a time to build relationships with others with whom we want to share Christ. It's an opportunity to have fun while serving God.
  - ii. WHO should be invited?
    1. There needs to be wisdom in who will be invited, because the goal is to leave a positive impression in our non-Christian friends. Be careful with the age, interests, stage in life, temperaments of those invited.
    2. Make sure non-Christians outnumber the Christians!



3. Invite true FOLLOWERS of Christ who are
    - a. Joyful and real in their walk with God
    - b. Capable of adapting to nonbelievers
    - c. Wise to know what topics to talk and not talk about
  4. Invite NON BELIEVERS:
    - a. friends from school, neighbors, colleagues, coworkers, etc
    - b. those who we want to reach for Christ
    - c. those for whom we have been praying for in our GG
  5. Invite JESUS to be present!
    - a. Pray in advance for Jesus presence. Pray that day. Keep praying during the party so people would be able to see Him through the life of his followers.
    - b. Even though you won't have a discussion from the Bible, it's ok to pray before people eat. Don't make a big deal out of praying, just do it because it's part of who you are.
- iii. WHY a Matthew Party?
1. Studies show that between 75 to 90% of those who give their lives to Jesus and join His church were primarily influenced by a relative or friend.
  2. Relationships are still an open door for doing a more natural evangelism
  3. This kind of gathering provides an opportunity to show what Christianity does in real people's lives.
  4. It's FUN, it SERVES God, and it WORKS!
- iv. What could be done?
1. Be CREATIVE while remembering that it should honor God, and that Christ is invited to it (1 Corinthians 10.31).
  2. Make sure the party is not about ENJOYING the ways of the world.
  3. Ideas: picnic, pizza party, pool party, game night (outdoor or indoor), a hike, ride bikes, a special dinner like thanksgiving, valentine, Christmas, etc.
  4. Your ideas:
 

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  5. Remember that food always gathers flies!

- v. How to make Matthew parties EVANGELISTIC?
  - 1. Since we want to win them to Christ be careful not to scare non-Christians. Here are some suggestions in four simple steps that you can take:
    - a. Focus on SOCIALIZING first. Don't be in a hurry to start talking about doctrines. What to do? Have fun, listen to what people have to say, get to know them, and share your passions.
    - b. Let your LIGHT SHINE. As conversations progress let others know you serve Christ, worship at our church, and attend a GG. Shortly, share how excited you are of participating in those activities.
    - c. SPRINGBOARD into the spiritual: when appropriate you can turn conversations into spiritual topics. Since everything we do in life is related to biblical principles watch for opportunities to make a bridge while talking of: decision making, priorities, faith, fear, finances, integrity, health, business, behavior, etc.
    - d. SHARE Jesus: when a non-Christian friend shows interest you can go deeper and help them take the following step by inviting them to come to your GG, study the Bible, come to our worship services, etc. This doesn't happen every time with everyone.
  - 2. Usually in a Matthew Party you would be able to cover the first THREE stages. Don't feel guilty if the fourth one was not reached. Keep developing those relationships and keep close to them, and God will open the doors to go deeper.
  - 3. Remember: if you introduce a spiritual topic and a visitor doesn't want to talk about it, don't force it, instead be patient and wait for another time.
- vi. What to do after a Matthew Party?
  - 1. Debrief with your GG how the Matthew party went
  - 2. Analyze who seemed to be spiritually interested
  - 3. Contact those more interested inviting them to your GG.
  - 4. Contact those not so interested thanking them for coming to the party.
  - 5. Do another Matthew Party and keep developing relationships

6. Remember and pray about GALATIANS 6.9 “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

**6. What could happen to you if you lead someone to Christ?**

- a. You could meet that person in HEAVEN!
- b. In the process of doing it, it’s most probably that you would go through the experience of Psalm 126:6 “WEEPING” but also “shouts of joy” as the fruits matures
- c. Your knowledge, hunger, and relationship with Christ will DEEPEN
- d. You could get ADDICTED and REWARDED for it!

**7. Appendix review:**

- a. Appendix 8A – Discover your God given circle of influence
- b. Appendix 8B - Sharing Your Personal Testimony
- c. Appendix 8C- Generational Methods of Evangelism
- d. Appendix 8D – 101 acts of kindness – (from the book 101 ways to reach your community, by Steve Sjogren)

**Explain: (5 Minutes)**

- Ask the students to go now to the Appendix material of this session.
- Explain the value of each material.
- Explain what you expect them to do with it.

**8. Recommended reading:**

- a. Jacobsen, R. (2008). *Bridges 101: Gas pumps, banana bread, and other attitudes*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association.
- b. Norman, B. (2003). *Bridging the gap: reaching the internet generation: an evangelistic strategy for reaching the postmodern generation*. Lincoln, NE: AdventSource.
- c. Sjogren, S. (2001). *101 ways to reach your community*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.
- d. The end of the spear - DVD

**Appendix 8A – Discover your God given circle of influence**

Identify your sphere of influence by completing each circle following the instructions:

- |          |                |   |
|----------|----------------|---|
| Circle 1 | Family:        | Write the names of your family members who are not following Jesus.                         |
| Circle 2 | Friendships:   | Write the names of your friends who are not following Jesus.                                |
| Circle 3 | Acquaintances: | Write the name of your acquaintances, neighbors, and coworkers who are not following Jesus. |

The diagram consists of three concentric circles. The innermost circle is labeled '1' and contains a cartoon drawing of a person with a lightbulb above their head, indicating an idea or realization. The middle circle is labeled '2' and the outermost circle is labeled '3'. Each circle has several horizontal lines for writing names.

Now "Jesus said, "Go home to your own people. Tell them your story--what the Master did, how he had mercy on you." Mark 5:19 (The Message)

Now, go and tell them! Help each one of them to know and love Jesus.

## Appendix 8B - Sharing Your Personal Testimony

### **WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?**

1. Stories are interesting
2. People can relate to them
3. It's hard to argue with your experience



### **HOW TO DO IT:**

1. Keep it simple, you are talking to a friend! Be yourself.
2. Remember to glorify God in your story, and don't try to impress the other telling him how bad you were
3. You don't need to read a verse from the Bible.
4. Tell in first person, "I was living and suffering..." "I was a mediocre Christian not feeling satisfied; I was bored at church every week..."
5. The whole story must be told in less than 4 minutes
6. Make it exciting, appealing, positive, full of joy.

### **THE 4 PHASES OF GIVING YOUR TESTIMONY:**

1. **BEFORE CHRIST:** Describe how your life was before you met Christ. If possible use details with which the other person may relate. Ex. "As you told me I didn't have peace either..."
2. **CONVERSION:** Emphasize those events that led to your conversion, how you felt when you realized you were a sinner, lost without hope. Explain what made you decide for Christ.
3. **AFTER CHRIST:** Mention how your life has changed after meeting Christ. Show how it has helped you in your daily life, family, work, health, and inner peace. Talk about the joy and hope you have and not about the problems you might be facing today.
4. **INVITATION:** Ask the person if he has ever felt like that, or if something similar happen to him. If he would like to have a similar encounter with Christ and the salvation that he brings. (ex. Would you like to know more about Christ and the peace that he gives?)

### **MAKING IT BETTER:**

1. You can practice it by giving it to another Christian and asking him to help you clarify it.
2. Then share it with a non Christian trying to remember the main points.
3. Adapt your testimony according to the listener.
4. Remember that the goal is to take your friend to Christ.

### **BIBLICAL EXAMPLE: PAUL'S TESTIMONY IN ACTS 26:1-29**

1. **Before**, Acts 26:1-11
2. **Conversion**, Acts 26:12-18
3. **After**, Acts 26:19-23 (includes three objections 26:24-26)
4. **Invitation**, Acts 26:27-29

**BEFORE**

(my life before Christ)

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**CONVERSION**

(my personal encounter with Christ)

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**AFTER**

(my life now, after the encounter with Christ)

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**INVITATION**

(invitation to know and accept Christ)

Karen, you could have a similar experience... ¿Would you like to know more about Christ, the salvation and peace that he gives?

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**Appendix 8C- Generational Methods of Evangelism** – (by Bruce Norman, *Bridging the gap: reaching the internet generation : an evangelistic strategy for reaching the postmodern generation*, 43)

Group	Pre-modern	Modern	Postmodern
Evangelistic Approach	Revelational Persuasion	Rational Persuasion	Relational Persuasion
Center	Truth/Revelation	Relational Mind	Experience/Spirituality
Philosophy	Revelation proves credibility of message	Science confirms possibility of truth	Practical living proves credibility of truth
Approach	Debate in church	Teaching in church	Lifestyle among people
Method	Tent meeting dealing with controversial differences	Revelation Seminar using health & archeological wedges	Personal fellowship groups with need sharing in dialogue
Role of Church	Military headquarters that debates truth but is separate from the world	Educational center that provides factual and scientific knowledge	Community center that provides sense of family closeness
Relationship with Interest	Short-term until baptism, then integration into regular church program	Medium-term until proper teaching is completed, then integration into church small groups	Long-term before and after baptism with integration into the church family/community

## Appendix 8D – 101 acts of kindness – (from the book *101 ways to reach your community*, by Steve Sjogren)

### Level 1: The Blitz

1. Soft Drink Giveaway
2. Gasoline Buy-down
3. Donut Giveaway during Morning Traffic
4. Assorted Giveaways
5. Dollar Drop or Quarter Drop
6. Dollar Tipping of Restaurant Servers
7. Trash Pick-Up with “Kindness in Progress” Signs
8. Twenty-Dollar Outreach Experiment
9. Newspaper Giveaway
10. Coffee / Hot Chocolate / Cappuccino Giveaway
11. Stamp Giveaway in Front of Post Office
12. Business Blast
13. Grocery Bag Packing
14. Grocery Cart Escort and Return
15. Popsicles / Ice Cream Giveaway
16. Ice Cream Coupons
17. Hand Cleaning Toilettes
18. Vinyl Gloves at Gas Stations
19. Windshield Washing
20. Parking Meter Feeding
21. Drinks at Biking Trails
22. Pens, Pencils, and Post-It Notes Giveaway
23. Photocopying
24. Computer Diskettes Giveaway
25. Drinks at Intramural or Greek Events
26. Breakfast Toaster Pastries Giveaway
27. Exam Answer (Scantron) Sheets Giveaway
28. Phone Cards for Long-Distance Calls
29. “Biggie Size” Food Orders at Fast Food Drive-Throughs
30. Suntan Lotion Giveaway
31. Surf Wax
32. Mother’s Day Carnation Giveaway
33. Church Match Book Giveaway
34. Watermelon / Pumpkin / Cantaloupe Giveaway
35. Boxes to Merchants
36. Scotch Tape Giveaway at Christmas
37. Flower Seed Packet Giveaway
38. Golf Tee or Golf Ball Giveaway / Golf Ball Cleaning
39. Glow-in-the-Dark Necklace Giveaway

### Level 2: Connecting to the Community

40. Totally Free Carwash
41. Interior Car Cleaning and Vacuuming
42. Oil Changes for Single Parents
43. Car Drying at Self-Serve Car Washes
44. Windshield Washer Fluid Fill
45. Windshield Ice Scraping
46. Windshield Washing at Self-Serve Gas Stations
47. Bike Fix-Up Clinic
48. Restroom Cleaning
49. Umbrellas Escort
50. Neighborhood Food Collection and Distribution
51. Business Window Washing
52. Polaroid Photos
53. Shoeshines

54. Helium Balloons and Balloon Animals
55. Dog Washing
56. Doggie Dirt Cleanup
57. Dorm Move-In Help
58. Coffee, Tea, and Lattes during Late-Night Study Sessions
59. Soft Drinks, Gatorade, and Lemonade at Class Sign-Up
60. Pizza on Move-In Day at Dorms
61. Christmas Gift-Wrapping
62. Meal Purchasing at Restaurants
63. Door-to-Door Sunday Morning Paper and Coffee
64. Filter Change for Air-Conditioners and Heaters
65. Garage Cleaning
66. Leaf Raking
67. Lawn Mowing
68. Roof Gutter Cleaning
69. Address Number Painting on curbs
70. Garbage Can Return from Street
71. Tulip Bulbs and Potted Plants
72. Snow Removal from Walks and Drives
73. Ice Melting for Sidewalks
74. Window Washing
75. Light Bulb Replacement
76. Fireplace Ash Removal
77. Smoke Detector Battery Replacement
78. Library Fines Payment
79. Winter / Summer Survival Kits
80. Christmas Tree Giveaway or After-Christmas Tree Collection
81. Laundromat Washer and Dryer Payment
82. Cocoons on Good Friday
83. Friendly Pet Outreach to Convalescent and Retirement Homes
84. “Free Prayer” table at Fairs

### Level 3: Investing in the City

85. Matthew’s Party
86. Block Party
87. Lamb’s Lunch
88. Parties of Appreciation for Police Officers, Fire Fighters, EMTs.
89. Accident Scene Cleanup
90. Single Parent’s House Repair
91. Blood Pressure Screening
92. Tutoring
93. School Supplies for Needy Families
94. Dorm Room Cleaning
95. Shopping Assistance for Shut-Ins
96. Apartment Move-Out Help
97. Birthday Party Organizing
98. Memorial Service for the Unchurched
99. Move-In Welcoming Party
100. Pool Party with a Purpose!
101. Birthday Cards



**Question and Answers: (5 Minutes)**

- Give time for students to ask questions and provide simple answers.
- Remind everyone that instructors will be available after the session if they have further questions or comments

**Review the Practicum: (5 Minutes)**

- Review where each one should be at this point.
- Mention what they need to turn in today as it was explained in the previous session
- Emphasize what they need to do for next week's meeting.
- Explain also what to do if you have fallen behind

**Remind of next week's meeting (2 minutes)**

- Remind people at what time the next training will begin and ask them to be on time!
- Remind of the place of the next training.
- Remind also the materials they need to bring to class

**Vision Sharing (3 minutes)**

- Share a story that will illustrate how GG evangelize better in groups than people by themselves
- Remind the GG vision:
  - The vision of our GG is to create a movement of groups that will help each person reach those in their circle of influence, help people grow into mature disciples of Jesus and be ready for his second coming

**Prayer**

- End the training with prayer.

# GG Leadership Development Program

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



## **Session # 9 – Care and Grow Disciples (to DO)**

### ***Objective of session # 9:***

1. Encourage students to discover and experience what it means to be a true disciple of Jesus.
2. Challenge each student to help each person in their groups to grow and mature in Christ.
3. Challenge each student to care for their groups as a good shepherd

### ***Materials needed for this session:***

1. Bible, GG student manual, white board and markers, pencils and papers.
2. Computer, projector and PPT

### ***Suggested time for this session:*** 90 minutes

### ***Optional additional reading materials for the instructor:***

1. Barna, G. (2001a). *Growing true disciples: New strategies for producing genuine followers of Christ*. Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press.
2. Bohoeffter, D. *The cost of discipleship*.
3. Foster, R. J. (1998). *Celebration of discipline: The path to spiritual growth* (20th anniversary ed.). San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.
4. Hull, B. (2004). *Choose the Life: Exploring a Faith that Embraces Discipleship*. Grand Rapids, MI: BakerBooks.
5. Idleman, K. (2011). *Not a Fan: Becoming a Completely Committed Follower of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan
6. Idleman, K. (2011). *Not a fan, a follower's story*. DVD

### ***Today's program: Session # 9***

1. Welcome and prayer
2. Thanksgiving: talk about how much you appreciate the students commitment to the training program
3. Review of today's session program: Briefly explain today's program
  - Introduction exercise
  - Study of session (fill in the blanks, exercises, discussion in groups, etc.)
  - Question and answers
  - Practicum's follow up: Homework!
  - Prayer
4. Introductory exercise
5. Study of Session # 9
6. Time for questions and answers
7. Practicum's follow up: Homework!
8. Vision Sharing: Share a story of how GG helps disciples grow.
9. Prayer

**Session # 9 – Care and Grow Disciples (to DO)*****Introductory exercise: (10 minutes)***

1. Begin by asking: when we read the NT we are amazed of Christ and his disciples traveling around and ministering to people. But sometimes we may wonder and ask ourselves: How did it feel? What did it mean to be a disciple in those days?
2. I want to invite you now to gather in groups of three and then each person will silently read Appendix 9D – Follow the Rabbi. Please underline, circle, mark what caught your eye, what amazes and inspires you. You will be asked to share it!
3. After 5 minutes ask the students to share in their groups the three biggest things that amazes them from this reading. They have another 5 minutes for this sharing
4. As the instructor, you can ask for three to five things to be share out loud.
5. Summarize in your own words

***Transition (you may say):*** I guess for many of us when we read this description of what it meant to be a disciple, we come to a clearer picture of what it really meant. Today we will study about disciples, especially about how the GG leaders can care and help them grow. Let's begin by reading our key passage for Session # 9, found in Ephesians 4.11-15....

1. **Key Passage:** Ephesians 4.11-15
2. **Why make disciples?** Reminder!
  - a. The mandate: Matthew 28.19
  - b. Because Jesus did not command his followers to go to all nations and make them 'MEMBERS', 'SPECTATORS', nor even 'CHRISTIANS'. He called us to make disciples!
  - c. And only true disciples can make more disciples
3. **What did it mean to be a disciple in the days of Jesus?**
  - a. SELECTION: You had chosen a rabbi and he had accepted you
  - b. PURPOSE: Your greatest goal in life was to be like him
  - c. COMMITMENT: You were willing to sacrifice it all because he is your top priority in life
  - d. PROCESS: You are there for the long run!
4. **Basic components of true discipleship** (adapted from George Barna's book *Growing true disciples*, 108-110)
  - a. PASSION People need to become passionate about becoming like Christ. Discipleship without passion is worthless. No

- program, teaching or cutting edge technology will produce it.
- b. **DEPTH** The ultimate goal is depth of life and experience in Christ
  - c. **MATURITY** The objective is to reach the highest earthly potential in Christ. People need to make a commitment to become spiritually mature.
  - d. **PRACTICE** There needs to be a greater emphasis on truly being a mature disciple, which involves knowing, being and doing.
  - e. **PROCESS** Discipleship is not a destination but a journey.
  - f. **INTERACTIVE** Must be done in community rather than isolation. Disciples grow better in community
  - g. **MULTIFACETED** Various areas of the spiritual life must be interwoven
  - h. **LIFELONG** "It is not possible in this life to complete the process of becoming spiritually mature."
  - i. **CHRISTLIKE** The ultimate goal to achieve and the model of our efforts is Jesus Christ.

5. **Dimensions of discipleship** - adapted from Hull, B. (2004). *Choose the life*.

- a. The leaders of a GG needs to help people in their groups grow and be completely transformed.
- b. This transformation and growth in discipleship is especially crucial in the following five dimensions or areas:

Action	What?	Goal	Key passages
Believing	What He believed	Transformed <u>MIND</u>	Matt 5-7; John 14-12-14; Phil 2.5
Living	The way He lived	Transformed <u>CHARACTER</u>	1 Cor 10.31
Loving	The way He loved	Transformed <u>RELATIONSHIPS</u>	John 15.12
Ministering	The way He ministered	Transformed <u>SERVICE</u>	Matt 20.28; John 14.12-14
Leading	The way He lead	Transformed <u>INFLUENCE</u>	Matt 5.16; 13.36

6. **How disciples grow?**

- a. Remember: EVERYONE can and should grow as disciple!
  - i. "God loves to RECYCLE. He transforms GARBAGE into glory. He turns TRASH into a triumph."
  - ii. All Christians are actually "made from 100% recycled material."
  - iii. Who are the greatest candidates for discipleship?
    - 1. People who DESPERATELY need Jesus. Luke 5.30-32
      - a. Bad people make good soil!
      - b. Those who need a physician. Mark 2.17
      - c. The lost. John 3.16
    - 2. People who stay FAITHFUL to the process of making more disciples

- a. 2 Timothy 2.2
    - b. Mathew 28.19
  - iv. Jesus looked at people not as they were, or even as he found them, but as they could BECOME by God's grace!
- b. METHODS for making disciples:
  - i. Neil Cole suggests that "the kind of discipleship, which will make an impact on the next generation, will be the sort that grabs the HEART of the disciple. Our methods must motivate from within and tap the disciple's intrinsic motivations rooted in VITAL RELATIONSHIP with God (Rom. 2:28-29)."
  - ii. "We must set hearts aflame with passion for Christ. If we can't see our own LIVES changed by the power of the gospel, we have no right to expect to see the world CHANGED by our message." Neil Cole, *Cultivating a Life for God*. 33
- c. Methods God uses to help people grow:
  - i. Cloud and Townsend (*How people grow*, 2001) present some key points based on John 15 on how God as the Gardener, makes people grow. They argue that people grow through:
    1. The BIBLE: they call it "the gardener's Handbook"
    2. No PAIN, no gain: The role of suffering and grief
    3. Growing tasting fruits: becoming a RIGHTEOUS person
    4. Pruning: DISCIPLINE
    5. WATER from a deeper well: Spiritual poverty
    6. Following the Gardener: OBEDIENCE
    7. Pulling the weeds: The problem of sin and temptation
    8. Facing reality: How TRUTH deepens growth
    9. Putting on the gloves: The importance of ACTIVITY
    10. Waiting for the harvest: TIME
- d. ENHANCE your growth by reading, discerning and applying
  - i. Many times God will also use other people to help his disciples grow.
  - ii. Sometimes you will meet this people personally and other times it will be through their writings.
  - iii. Caution: regardless of what author you are reading always follow the advice found in:
    1. 1 THESSALONIANS 5:21 Test everything. Hold on to the good. NIV
    2. ISAIAH 8:20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. KJV
    3. Ellen G. White wrote: Those who would not fall a prey to Satan's devices must guard well the AVENUES OF THE

**SOUL: they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts.** The mind should not be left to wander at random upon every subject that the adversary of souls may suggest.... This will require earnest prayer and unceasing watchfulness. We must be aided by the abiding influence of the Holy Spirit, which will attract the mind upward and habituate it to dwell on pure and holy things. And we must give diligent study to the Word of God. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy word." "Thy word," says the psalmist, "have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." *My Life*, March 22.

- iv. Ask mature disciples who are well respected for the names of good books or materials that would help you to grow and mature as a disciple.
- v. My personal experience:
  - 1. The Bible: This has been my helper, challenger and greatest accountability partner. Read it completely once a year. Find a yearly reading plan at Appendix 2E
  - 2. Ellen G. White books: Read them along with the Bible and they will greatly enhance your growth and will challenge you to practice what you are reading.
    - a. Begin by reading: (I recommend the following order)
      - i. Steps to Christ
      - ii. Patriarchs and prophets
      - iii. Prophets and kings
      - iv. The desire of ages
      - v. Acts of the apostles
      - vi. The great controversy
    - b. Go deeper into other areas of practical growth:
      - i. Christian service
      - ii. Evangelism
      - iii. Ministry of healing
      - iv. Child guidance
      - v. Counsel on diet and food
      - vi. Mind, character and personality I, and II
      - vii. ... continue with many others!
    - c. Find her books in many languages for online reading, listening, or free download at [www.egwwritings.org](http://www.egwwritings.org)
- vi. Remember the advice:
  - 1. 2 CHRONICLES 20:20 ...Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, Judah and people of Jerusalem! Have faith

- in the LORD your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful."
2. If you want to be successful read and follow the advice of God's chosen prophets!
- e. The role of self-control and self-discipline in growing disciples
- i. "Self-control provides a STRUCTURE for love. People who have internal discipline have learned to run their lives in such a manner that God's love flows through them in very fruitful fulfilling ways... They are not slaves of their impulses. *If love is the heart of the person, discipline is the SKELETON, giving a person form and protection.*" (Cloud and Townsend, [2001], *How people grow*, 252)
- f. The need to equip disciples: educating vs equipping
- i. Steve Cordle (2005) argues that
    1. "people are educated when they KNOW something. People are equipped when they can DO SOMETHING with their knowledge. Accumulating knowledge is part of the equipping process, but is not the whole. ...the task of equipping them to change the world by making disciples." (*The church in many houses: reaching your community through cell-based ministry*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 85)
    2. "...the information our churches teach is meant to be 'ammunition' for the mission of reaching others for Christ." (87)
    3. "equipping helps people grow spiritually because it requires applying the Scriptures." (88)
    4. "Essentially, spiritual growth means becoming more like Jesus... The indicator of true spiritual growth is not an increased feeling of spirituality, not attainment of a certain level of biblical knowledge. Spiritual growth produces an inner and outward TRANSFORMATION." (87)
- g. The equipping track for growing disciples:
- i. Steve Cordle (2005) explains that "an equipping track is a set of CLEAR STEPS designed to help a person grow from a believer into a leader of a group leaders (that is, a disciple who makes disciples). The track consists of both classroom teaching and personal mentoring." (*The church in many houses: reaching your community through cell-based ministry*, 89)
  - ii. Successful churches create a CLEAR PATH or ROAD MAP (equipping track) for their people to follow in order to help them grow, mature as disciples and lead others to Christ.
  - iii. Joel Comiskey (1999) argues that "the successful cell churches know nothing of fuzziness and fog in leadership training. The track is CLEAR, and many embark on the doable training for future LEADERS." (*Reap the Harvest*, 154)

iv. Example 1 – PURPOSE DRIVEN Church – by Rick Warren:

- |             |            |                   |              |
|-------------|------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 1. Stage 1: | Membership | Knowing Christ    | Communion    |
| 2. Stage 2: | Maturity   | Growing in Christ | Discipleship |
| 3. Stage 3: | Ministry   | Serving Christ    | Ministry     |
| 4. Stage 4: | Mission    | Sharing Christ    | Evangelism   |

v. Example 2 – by Joel Comiskey

- |                 |                            |   |
|-----------------|----------------------------|---|
| 1. First step:  | Basic <u>DOCTRINE</u>      | Includes the action step of baptism in water  |
| 2. Second Step: | Inner Development          | Includes the action step of having a regular devotional life                          |
| 3. Third step:  | Personal <u>EVANGELISM</u> | Includes the action step of witnessing and inviting a non-Christian to the cell group |
| 4. Fourth step: | <u>LEADERSHIP</u> training | Includes the action step of leading a cell group                                      |

**Other examples of Discipleship and leadership tracks:**

- Example 3- the Bethany Church discipleship track:
  - Assign Sponsor
  - Follow-up and Road to Maturity
  - Are You Going to Heaven tract
  - Water Baptism tract
  - Follow-up tract
  - Baptism in the Holy Spirit tract
  - Bethany Touch Group tract
  - “Two Question” test
  - Evangelize with the new believer
- Example 4 - Equipping Track at Crossroads church – Steve Cordle
  - Cell group: Emerging leaders start growing in the cell group. Apprenticeship: on-the-job equipping
  - Encounter Retreat: Emerging leaders are motivated and prepared by Encounter Retreat
  - School of discipleship/Leaders: Emerging leaders are taught in the school of discipleship
  - Coaching Group: Discipling the leaders. They meet twice a month



- vi. Remember: “Just because we don’t know HOW to do something doesn’t mean we shouldn’t try to do it.” Reggie McNeal
- h. The role of RELATIONSHIPS in growing/maturing disciples
  - i. Solomon: Read PROVERBS 27:17 As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.
  - ii. Greg Ogden says: “Disciple making is not a program but a RELATIONSHIP” (*Transforming discipleship*)
  - iii. Reggie McNeal writes: ‘God SCULPTS our souls through friends in our lives.” (*A work of heart*, 127).
  - iv. Cloud and Townsend: “Biblical growth is designed to include other people as God’s INSTRUMENTS.” (*How people grow*, 122)
  - v. The fundamental theorem of Discipleship:
    - 1. Discipleship = RELATIONSHIP + INTENTIONALITY
    - 2. Discipleship is always intentional and it always involves relating.
- i. Disciple making is a LIFE LONG process of OBEDIENCE
  - i. We live in a society where instant things are highly priced and desired. But discipleship is quite the opposite and many can be discouraged.
  - ii. Eugene H. Peterson wrote the book *A long obedience in the same direction: Discipleship in an instant society*, where he magnificently describes the challenge of wanting to make disciples overnight and what it really takes to help disciples grow.
  - iii. Neil Cole point out that “Perhaps the reason that we don’t see multiplication of disciples more often is that we are trying to do too much too soon in the process. We fail to grasp the fact that discipleship, following Christ is in SIMPLE OBEDIENCE, is a life-long pursuit. (*Cultivating a life for God*, 35)
- j. Role of GG leaders in growing disciples: GG leaders must be...
  - i. BUILDERS: they need to:
    - 1. Be very careful how they build others: 1 Corinthians 3:10
    - 2. Teach each disciple to build themselves up: Jude 1:20
    - 3. Encourage disciples to build others: 1 Thessalonians 5:11
    - 4. Encourage disciples to have spiritual gifts that build up the church. 1 Corinthians 14:12
    - 5. Build up neighbors: Romans 15:2
    - 6. Study the Word of God which truly builds up: Acts 20:32
    - 7. Build on solid ground: Ephesians 2:20
  - ii. MENTORS
    - 1. Be close
    - 2. Be available
    - 3. Be honest
    - 4. Be a good listener
    - 5. Be spiritual
    - 6. Be a feedback giver

- iii. CHALLENGERS of
  - 1. Principles
  - 2. Priorities
  - 3. Behavior
  - 4. Dreams
  - 5. Culture
  - 6. Assumptions
  - 7. Use of time, talents, temple, money, influence, etc.
  - 8. Mediocrity
  - 9. Phariseism
- iv. Advocate for ACCOUNTABILITY
  - 1. GG leaders must not be afraid of asking direct questions
  - 2. People need to be confronted when not honoring God
  - 3. Encourage people to make wise decisions
  - 4. Help people keep their promises
- v. PROMOTER of relationships
  - 1. Disciples need personal contact with God in order to grow
  - 2. Neil Cole uses the example of making copies, from copies instead of the original... in this process flaws and imperfections are copied by all the following generations of disciples... Neil Cole, *Cultivating a Life for God*, 81.
  - 3. “When it comes to reproducing disciples and leaders, the same principles apply. Each succeeding GENERATION must be directly linked to the MASTER if it is to maintain and reflect the purity and beauty of the Lord.”
  - 4. Disciples grow ONLY as they spend time united with Jesus. John 15.5
    - a. Teach GG members how to have personal worship time
    - b. Teach them the spiritual disciplines
  - 5. Walk by their side until they are ready to share Christ with others
  - 6. Authors Easum and Atkinson (2007) suggest: “the key is to decide what you think will help someone GROW CLOSER to Christ – a combination of love, service, and fellowship, or just Bible knowledge. The study part of the group is designed to work relationally...People want to know how to apply centuries-old concepts to their lives today.” (*Go big with small groups : eleven steps to an explosive small group ministry*, 14)
- vi. Supporter of the need to pay the PRICE of discipleship

**7. The COST of discipleship**

- a. True discipleship, rightly understood, is costly.
- b. Discipleship without sanctification and holiness is hollow and simply empty words
- c. Consider what the Bible says about the cost of being a disciple
  - i. Luke 14.25-33 What is the cost of being a disciple according to Jesus?
    1. \_\_\_\_\_
    2. \_\_\_\_\_
    3. \_\_\_\_\_
    4. \_\_\_\_\_
    5. \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. Philippians 3.7-11 What additional advice does Paul give about the cost of following Jesus?
    1. \_\_\_\_\_
    2. \_\_\_\_\_
    3. \_\_\_\_\_
    4. \_\_\_\_\_
    5. \_\_\_\_\_

**8. How to EVALUATE the growth of a disciple?**

- a. What is truly valued needs to be carefully measured and evaluated.
- b. George Barna (*Growing true disciples*) studied churches that are successful at discipleship. These churches encourage their people to evaluate their personal growth as disciples through:
  - i. "Self-evaluations of how they are doing in reaching their predetermined spiritual goals.
  - ii. Discussion with family and small group members regarding progress
  - iii. Filling out church-developed or standardized assessment tools
  - iv. Regular advisory session with more-mature Christians to discuss growth patterns and experiences
  - v. Encouraging people to journal and to review previous journal entries to sense their progress or barriers
  - vi. Challenging people to identify ways in which they apply the lessons from recent sermons
  - vii. Reflective prayer, seeking direct revelation from God as to what is and is not working in the discipleship efforts."
- c. Remember: you can use the "Spiritual Growth Assessment" in order to evaluate and identify the areas in which a disciple needs to grow - See Appendix 2A

### 9. Discipleship and JOY!

- a. One of the most crucial factors for the continual growth of each disciple is that they experience joy throughout the whole process of maturing as a disciple.
- b. This doesn't mean that everything will be easy. That would not be the case especially when God is working in us true transformation.
- c. Consider the following texts:
  - i. John 15.11 Jesus wants his disciples to have his joy, and to be complete
  - ii. John 16.22 no one can take away our joy
  - iii. John 16.24 our joy can be complete
  - iv. John 17.13 Jesus wants his disciples to have "the full measure of my joy within them"
  - v. Philippians 4.4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!
- d. As I like saying, there are too many Christians with HORSE faces already! Let your face show the joy God brings into your life as you mature and grow in Him.

### 10. Taking CARE of disciples

- a. GG leaders are also called to take care of their flock (group) entrusted to them by God.
- b. The leaders of a GG are to be true shepherds
  - i. Characteristics of shepherds
    1. A shepherd has a FLOCK.
    2. A shepherd LEADS.
    3. A shepherd gets CLOSE to the sheep.
    4. GG leadership is about getting close to people.
  - ii. The HEART of a shepherd – Comparison (John 10:11-15)

#### **Shepherd**

Is willing to SACRIFICE

Knows his sheep INDIVIDUALLY

Has close relationship with GOD  
LOVES the sheep

#### **Hired Hand**

Runs away when it gets challenging

Knows sheep as a flock

Is there for personal gain

Simply does his job

- c. The CALL of a shepherd
  - i. After His resurrection Jesus spent some time with Peter and asked him if he loved him. After an affirmative response Jesus tells his disciple to "feed his lamb", "take care of my sheep" and to "feed my sheep" (John 21.15-17 NIV)
  - ii. In John Wesley's small groups leaders were the shepherds of the group.

**Exercise:** (7 minutes)

- Ask students to find a quiet place (maybe outside, in other rooms, etc)
- Instruct them to pray, read and meditate on Ezekiel 34:1-6
- Ask each one to respond to the questions below and talk to God call.
- Once students return, ask a couple of them to share:
  - What impressed them the most?
  - What did you sense God telling you?
- Close with prayer

iii. Meditate and answer: Find a place where you can be quiet, read alone and meditate on EZEKIEL 34.1-6. Answer the following questions:

1. What is the calling of a shepherd?

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2. How do you personally feel about it?

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3. Pray for a shepherd's heart.

iv. Being a shepherd involves mainly five principles

1. CARE for the Sheep (acts 20:28-29)
2. KNOW the Sheep (John 10:14-15)
3. SEEK the sheep (Luke 15.4)
4. FEED the sheep (Psalm 23:1-3)
5. WATCH OUT for the sheep (John 10:10; Eph. 6:12)

v. Remember: "Shepherding means both Supplying people's needs (care) and Developing them (discipleship)." (Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson, *Building a Church of Small Groups*, 107)

**11. Put them to WORK - says Ellen G White.**

- a. Remember 1 Peter 4.10: Each one has his own work!
- b. “The best help that ministers can give the members of our churches is not sermonizing, but PLANNING WORK for them. Give each one something to do for others. Help all to see that as receivers of the grace of Christ they are under obligation to work for Him. And let all be TAUGHT how to work. Especially should those who are NEWLY COME to the faith be educated to become laborers together with God. If set to work, the despondent will soon forget their despondency; the weak will become strong, the ignorant intelligent, and all will be prepared to present the truth as it is in Jesus. They will find an unfailing helper in Him who has promised to save all that come unto Him.” *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 9, 82.
- c. In order to care for your flock help them be involved in ministry.
- d. Help them discover their spiritual gifts and ask them to do something with them!

**Exercise: (15 minutes)**

- This exercise is better to have it filled in advance, as homework. So
- If it hasn't been done before then plan at least some 20 minutes extra:
  - Ask each student to complete the Spiritual Gift Survey found in Appendix 9A
  - Explain how to answer, add, and discover the Gifts you already have been given
- Once the survey is completed then ask the students to get in groups of three.
- Ask them to take turns and have each one mention what he thinks are the gifts God has given to the other two participants.
- This is a great exercise for affirmation and encouragement.
- After the time in the smaller groups ask the whole group of students:
  - What will you now do with your discovered gifts?
  - What is God inviting you to do?

- e. Do you know the spiritual gifts God has given you?
  - i. If you haven't done it yet, take time to complete the Spiritual Gifts Survey found in Appendix 9A.
  - ii. Once each one has discovered their gifts it's time to find ways in which to server others with them.

- f. As a leader of a GG it's your privilege and responsibility to find way to use everyone's gift in serving God and others.

### 7. Appendix review:

- e. Appendix 9A – Spiritual gift Survey
- f. Appendix 9B – Rules of self-discovery
- g. Appendix 9C – Graph of Life
- h. Appendix 9D – Follow the Rabbi
- i. Appendix 9E – Ten questions for a disciple checkup

#### Explain: (5 Minutes)

- Ask the students to go now to the Appendix material of this session.
- Explain the value of each material.
- Explain what you expect them to do with it.

### 8. Recommended reading:

- a. Barna, G. (2001a). *Growing true disciples: New strategies for producing genuine followers of Christ*. Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press.
- b. Bohoefffer, D. *The cost of discipleship*.
- c. Foster, R. J. (1998). *Celebration of discipline: The path to spiritual growth* (20th anniversary ed.). San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.
- d. Hull, B. (2004). *Choose the Life: Exploring a Faith that Embraces Discipleship*. Grand Rapids, MI: BakerBooks.
- e. Idleman, K. (2011). *Not a Fan: Becoming a Completely Committed Follower of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan
- f. Idleman, K. (2011). *Not a fan, a follower's story*. DVD

## Appendix 9A - Spiritual Gifts Survey

- 1 Corinthians 12.1 Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. 4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. 18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.
- 1 Peter 4.10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

*"This statement has been satisfactorily experienced in my life" or "I believe I have the ability for this":* **How to score your test:**    **Much = 3**       **Some = 2**       **Little = 1**       **Not at all = 0**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. ___ Enjoying the responsibility for the spiritual growth of a group of Christians. | 21. ___ Enjoy working out solutions to complicated problems.   |
| 2. ___ Enabling persons to learn Biblical truths in detail.                           | 22. ___ Having insights of truth which bring conviction to other Christians.                                     |
| 3. ___ Applying truth effectively in my own life.                                     | 23. ___ Being an instrument for dislodging the complacent and redirecting the wayward to face spiritual reality. |
| 4. ___ Having ability to discover new truths for myself.                              | 24. ___ Judging well between what is poor and what is good (or evil and good).                                   |
| 5. ___ Verbally encouraging the wavering, troubled, or discouraged.                   | 25. ___ Giving things or money liberally to the Lord's work.   |
| 6. ___ Clearly perceiving the difference between truth and error.                     | 26. ___ Ushering or cleaning up at a church.   |
| 7. ___ Managing money well in order to give liberally to the Lord's work.             | 27. ___ Aiding the undeserving.  |
| 8. ___ Assisting key leaders to relieve them for their essential job.                 | 28. ___ Learning well another language in order to minister to a different people.                               |
| 9. ___ Working joyfully with persons ignored by the majority.                         | 29. ___ Sharing joyfully how Christ has brought me to Himself.   |
| 10. ___ Adapting easily in a culture different from mine.                             | 30. ___ Providing a gracious haven for guests.   |
| 11. ___ Leading others to a decision for salvation through faith in Christ.           | 31. ___ Generally being more excited about the future than the past.   |
| 12. ___ Providing food/lodging graciously to those in need.                           | 32. ___ Knowing where I am going and seeing other Christians follow me.  |
| 13. ___ Believing God will keep His promises in spite of circumstantial evidence.     | 33. ___ Able to organize ideas, people, things and time for more effective ministry.                             |
| 14. ___ Persuading others to move toward achieving Biblical objectives.               | 34. ___ In the name of the Lord, healing the mentally disturbed.   |
| 15. ___ Easily delegating important responsibility to others.                         | 35. ___ Taking prayer requests more seriously than other Christians seem to.                                     |
| 16. ___ In the name of the Lord, curing diseases.                                     | 36. ___ Enjoy routine work at church that would bore others.   |
| 17. ___ When praying for others, I often lose track of the time.                      | 37. ___ Knowing intimately and being well known by those I serve and guide.                                      |
| 18. ___ Enjoy being called upon to do special jobs around church.                     | 38. ___ Making difficult Biblical truths understandable to others.   |
| 19. ___ Sacrificially giving myself for young or straying Christians.                 | 39. ___ Choosing from several Biblical alternatives an option that usually works.                                |
| 20. ___ Explaining clearly Scriptural teaching to others.                             | 40. ___ Acquiring and mastering new facts and principles of Bible truth.   |



41. \_\_\_ Verbally challenging those who seem spiritually apathetic.
42. \_\_\_ Tending to look beneath the surface and question people's motives.
43. \_\_\_ Feeling deeply moved when confronted with urgent financial needs in God's work.
44. \_\_\_ Typing, filing, or recording figures or minutes for the Lord's work.
45. \_\_\_ Visiting in hospitals or retirement homes and being blessed.
46. \_\_\_ Being able to relate well to Christians of different race, language, or culture.
47. \_\_\_ Explaining clearly Bible truths that point people to Jesus as the Savior.
48. \_\_\_ Having a knack of making strangers feel at home.
49. \_\_\_ Trusting in the presence and power of God for the impossible.
50. \_\_\_ Influencing others toward accomplishing Biblical goals.
51. \_\_\_ Am able to set goals and make effective plans to reach them.
52. \_\_\_ In the name of the Lord, treating successfully those who are spiritually sick.
53. \_\_\_ Prayer is one of my favorite spiritual exercises.
54. \_\_\_ Feeling satisfaction in doing menial tasks for God's glory.
55. \_\_\_ Helping needy Christians by guiding them to relevant portions of the Bible and praying with them.
56. \_\_\_ Communicating Biblical truths to others which produce changes in knowledge, attitudes, values or conduct.
57. \_\_\_ My nominating others for positions prove to be good selections.
58. \_\_\_ I study and read a great deal to learn Biblical truths.
59. \_\_\_ Able to counsel effectively the perplexed, guilty, or addicted.
60. \_\_\_ Accurately recognizing what spiritual gift another Christian has or does not have.
61. \_\_\_ Able to earn much money for giving to the Lord's work.
62. \_\_\_ Distributing Gospel literature or papers in my community.
63. \_\_\_ Taking shut-ins out for a drive, or assisting them in practical ways.
64. \_\_\_ Enjoying life in a foreign country.
65. \_\_\_ Emphasizing a message which is primarily the Gospel of salvation.
66. \_\_\_ Having a genuine graciousness and appreciation of each guest.
67. \_\_\_ Feeling sure I know God's specific will for the future growth of His work even when others are not sure.
68. \_\_\_ Steering others through difficulties in the Lord's work.
69. \_\_\_ Able to lead a group in making decisions together.
70. \_\_\_ Praying for others so that healing occurs.
71. \_\_\_ God consistently answers my prayers in a tangible way.
72. \_\_\_ Willing to take orders rather than give them.
73. \_\_\_ Able to restore persons who have wandered away from their Christian community.
74. \_\_\_ Training Christians to be more obedient disciples of Christ.
75. \_\_\_ Feeling an unusual presence of God when important decisions need to be made.
76. \_\_\_ Able to distinguish key and important facts of Scripture.
77. \_\_\_ Comforting a Christian in his affliction or suffering.
78. \_\_\_ Can see through a phony before his phoniness is clearly evident.
79. \_\_\_ Willing to maintain a lower standard of living in order to benefit God's work.
80. \_\_\_ Happy to be a teacher's aid in a Bible class.
81. \_\_\_ Talking cheerfully with those in prison, or the lonely shut-in person.
82. \_\_\_ Having ability to learn foreign languages.
83. \_\_\_ Continually seeking out unbelievers in order to win them.
84. \_\_\_ Enjoying strangers in my house.
85. \_\_\_ Trusting in the reliability of God when all looks dim.
86. \_\_\_ Others follow me because I have knowledge which contributes to the building up of my church.
87. \_\_\_ Able to recruit Christians and put them to work exercising their spiritual gifts.
88. \_\_\_ Helping effectively those who are feeble-minded.
89. \_\_\_ Sometimes praying when I probably should be doing other things.
90. \_\_\_ Enjoying it when others express a need for my help.

### Summary Sheet

1. Place the numerical value of each answer next to the number of each question:

**MUCH=3      SOME=2      LITTLE=1      NOT AT ALL=0**

2. Now add up the five numbers in each row, placing the sum in the "Total" column:

		Value of Answers					Total	Spiritual Gift	Some Spiritual References
Row	A	1	19	37	55	73		Pastor	Ephesians 4.11-16
Row	B	2	20	38	56	74		Teacher	Proverbs 9.8-11
Row	C	3	21	39	57	75		Wisdom	1 Corinthians 2.1-13
Row	D	4	22	40	58	76		Knowledge	Colossians 2; Proverbs 2
Row	E	5	23	41	59	77		Exhortation	Hebrews 10.19-25
Row	F	6	24	42	60	78		Discernment	Hebrews 5.11-14; 1 John 4
Row	G	7	25	43	61	79		Giving	2 Corinthians 8.1-7; 9.2-8
Row	H	8	26	44	62	80		Helps	Luke 8.1-3
Row	I	9	27	45	63	81		Mercy	Romans 12.8d; 15-21
Row	J	10	28	46	64	82		Missionary	1 Corinthians 9.19-23
Row	K	11	29	47	65	83		Evangelist	Acts 14-19
Row	L	12	30	48	66	84		Hospitality	Romans 12.13; 1 Peter 4.8-9
Row	M	13	31	49	67	85		Faith	Hebrews 11
Row	N	14	32	50	68	86		Leadership	Acts 15; Romans 12.8c; 14
Row	O	15	33	51	69	87		Administration	John 6.1-13; Acts 6.1-7
Row	P	16	34	52	70	88		Healing	James 5.13-16
Row	Q	17	35	53	71	89		Intercession	Exodus 32-33
Row	R	18	36	54	72	90		Serving	Luke 10.38-42; Acts 6.1-7



The Spiritual Gifts that the Lord has given me are:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ (Text\_\_ ) Home \_\_\_\_\_

Student @ \_\_\_\_\_ Major \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Church member of \_\_\_\_\_

Please tell us, how can we help you? \_\_\_\_\_

Highest Spiritual Gift	Score	Gifts that others believe I have
1.		1.
2.		2.
3.		I'm passionate about:
4.		1.
5.		2.
I work in (have experience in)		

A. W. Tozer was a highly respected theologian and powerful writer who often challenged Christians to action. He suggested seven areas for self-discovery and getting in touch with ourselves:

1. What do you want most?
2. What do you think about most?
3. How do you use your money?
4. What do you do with your leisure time?
5. Whose company do you enjoy?
6. What and who do you admire?
7. What makes you laugh?

## Appendix 9C – Graph of Life

How satisfied are you with different parts of your life? Circle a number from 1 to 10 next to each of the following areas of life. If you give an item a 1, you are completely dissatisfied with this part of your life. It means, “This part of my life is entirely unacceptable to me in its current state.” A number 10 means, “I couldn’t be happier or more satisfied with this area of life.”

Your overall satisfaction will change from day to day, but try to give an overall assessment of *where you are at present*. Skip any items that don’t apply to you.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Physical Health
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Mental/Emotional Health
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Career/Employment Satisfaction
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Financial Stability
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Marriage/Romantic Relationships
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Home Life (Immediate Family)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Extended Family (Relatives, In-laws)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Friends/Social Life
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Recreation/Relaxation
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Lifestyle (Degree of Busyness)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Personal Life Fulfillment
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Personal Spiritual Life
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Church/Religious Life
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Physical Comfort (Housing, neighborhood, cars...)

Please join the circles together to make a graph.

Now go through this again and circle the numbers in terms of *where you would like to be*. Join these circles to make a different graph. Use a different-colored pen or dotted lines so that you don’t get the graphs confused.

## Appendix 9D – Follow the Rabbi

(<http://community.elevatorup.com/ttwmk2/assets/followtherabbi.swf>)

- Living amidst a cauldron of conflicting ideas, Jesus ministered as a Jewish rabbi. He frequently visited Galilean synagogues, using their traditions as a platform for his ministry.
- Jesus also had disciples, called talmidim. But these disciples were not the quiet, middle-aged men that we often imagine today. These young people modeled a radical view of discipleship that was common in Jesus' day.
- Of all the times and places he could have come, God chose first-century Galilee, with its unique view of religious life and discipleship. Looking back to the culture of Jesus' day, Christians find an exciting-and challenging-picture of how to follow our Rabbi today.

### 1. The Rabbi:

- a. Of all the times and places he could have come, Jesus lived and taught in the religious communities of first-century Galilee. Rabbis played a significant role in these communities, serving as both teachers and role models.
- b. Today, it is hard for Western Christians to imagine what Jesus' life and ministry were like. But the gospels reveal one important aspect of Jesus' life: He lived and taught as a Jewish rabbi.
- c. As we learn about the lifestyle of first-century rabbis, we gain a rich picture of Jesus as our own rabbi-an amazing teacher we eagerly follow.

#### i. Types of rabbis:

1. In Jesus' day, the title of "rabbi" was not a church office or degree. Rather, it was a title of respect and honor given by the community.
2. Most rabbis practiced a trade while also teaching the Torah. They were commonly called "Torah teachers" or "teachers of the law." They had memorized the Torah and become master storytellers, but they were limited to teaching only the accepted interpretations of other rabbis.
3. Some rabbis, who achieved special recognition and wisdom, taught their own interpretations and were able to support themselves entirely by teaching. These brilliant rabbis were recognized as having s'mikeh the authority to introduce new teachings. They had memorized the entire Old Testament, were exceptional teachers, and were trusted to provide new insights from God's Word.

#### ii. Jesus the rabbi

4. The Text tells us that Jesus was recognized as a rabbi. A Pharisee, a Sadducee, a Roman, and a Gentile-all referred to Jesus as "rabbi." Like the typical rabbis of his day, Jesus:
  - a. Depended on the hospitality of others (Luke 8:3).

- b. Traveled, teaching outside or in synagogues, homes, and even the Temple courts (Luke 4:14-6; Matt. 5:1-2; 26:55; Mark 6:2).
- c. Was accompanied by his disciples (Matt. 17:24; Matt. 20:29). He selected a group of students who followed Him, learning as they went.
- d. Encouraged his followers to take on the "yoke of Torah" (i.e., they would commit to obeying Torah as the rabbi taught) (Matt. 11:29-30).
- e. Taught mainly from the first five books of the Old Testament.

### iii. Jesus teaching style

- 5. Like many rabbis of his day, Jesus told parables and gave object lessons to convey truth. He was a master storyteller who often wove biblical concepts and passages together in a new way.
- 6. The people of his day recognized Jesus as being a rabbi with s'mikeh—he was an exceptionally gifted rabbi with the authority to teach his own interpretations of the Word. As Matthew 7 records, "the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law." Mat 7.29
- 7. As a s'mikeh rabbi, Jesus had probably memorized the entire Hebrew Testament. His teaching assumed that his audience also knew a great deal of the Text by memory. He often quoted a portion of a passage, knowing that his audience would remember the rest.
- 8. Jesus was careful to use passages and concepts that his audience would know. When speaking to women, for example, he quoted from Psalms, one of the books that girls studied during their synagogue education. And when teaching in non-Jewish areas, he would not quote from the Text at all, but would draw on word pictures and concepts from their own culture.

## 2. The synagogue

- a. The early synagogue helped Jews maintain their identity while living in a foreign, pagan country. During their captivity, the Jewish people began to gather to study the Torah and worship God. The synagogue building grew out of this practice, and it became the center of Jewish social life, serving as school, meeting place, courtroom, and house of prayer.
- b. Synagogues continued to be important during the first century. By the time Jesus' ministry began, a synagogue was found in most Galilean towns. Synagogue practices provided a ready platform for Jesus' teachings, and later the apostle Paul.

- c. More significantly, the synagogue created a place for Jesus and his early followers to worship. The synagogue was not simply a place to teach God's Word, but also a place for Jewish people to cultivate their relationship to God.
- d. **The service:**
  - i. Much like Christians today, the people who came to worship at the synagogue followed a familiar pattern.
  - ii. When the first three stars could be seen on Friday evening, the hazzan blew the shofar to announce that the Sabbath had begun. People gathered at twilight to eat the Sabbath meal in their homes. The following morning, the community gathered in the synagogue building.
  - iii. Synagogue services began with several blessings to God, followed by a recitation of the Shema: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deut. 6:4). Following this were readings from the Torah and the prophets, a short sermon, and probably prayers and worship as well.
  - iv. Services ended with a benediction. If a priest was present to offer it, the Aaronic blessing from the Torah would be used.
- e. **Education**
  - i. - Study began at age five or six in elementary school, called bet sefer. Boys studied and memorized the Torah. Because women were worship leaders in first-century synagogues, girls studied Psalms, Proverbs, Deuteronomy, and Leviticus.
  - ii. - At age twelve, girls usually left school to get married. Boys studied the more complicated oral interpretation of the Torah. Question-and-answer sessions between teacher and student were added to the memorization drills.
  - iii. - Students became a religious adult at age thirteen, and gifted students continued their studies beyond this age in secondary school, beth midrash. Here they began the process of studying the Torah and the Haftorah (the rest of the Hebrew Testament) and applying it to specific situations. Many students studied half the day, and learned a trade the other half.
  - iv. - After age 15, the truly gifted would travel and study with a famous rabbi as a talmid (disciple). The disciple's goal was to "become like their rabbi" by learning and applying the wisdom of Torah and oral tradition to daily situations.
  - v. - At thirty, gifted students entered their full ability and often became a rabbi themselves.

### 3. The talmidim

- a. The Hebrew word for disciples is "talmidim" and in Jesus' day, it was common for a group of talmidim to follow and learn from a rabbi. These disciples were usually in their teens when they began to follow a rabbi, and most of Jesus' disciples were probably fifteen years old or younger.

- b. Being a disciple of Jesus-a talmid-was not a simple matter. It was a radical and life-changing commitment. Jesus' twelve talmidim ultimately followed in the footsteps of their rabbi: They changed the world, and most of them gave their life in the process.
- c. As we learn about the disciples' life and goals, Christians are challenged to imitate the radical lifestyle of a talmid as we follow our Rabbi.

**d. Becoming a talmid**

- i. In Jesus' day, gifted students would listen to various rabbis and then approach their chosen rabbi and ask, "May I follow you?" In effect, the student was asking, "Do I have what it takes to be like you?" The rabbi would either accept the student as a talmid or would encourage him to pursue a trade.
- ii. Jesus broke this pattern when he chose his own talmidim. As he asked his disciples to follow him, they knew without a doubt that their rabbi believed in them. And as they came to see Jesus as the Messiah, they realized that God believed in them too.

**e. Following the rabbi**

- i. A talmid did not follow a rabbi as a student. They desired to gain the rabbi's knowledge, but for a greater goal-they wanted to become like the rabbi himself.
- ii. A talmid followed the rabbi everywhere-every day, and every hour of the day-often without knowing or asking where the rabbi was going. The talmid rarely left his rabbi's side for fear that he would miss a teachable moment. He watched the rabbi's every move, noting how he acted and thought about a variety of situations.
- iii. Talmidim trusted their rabbi completely. They were eager to hear the rabbi's teachings and they worked passionately to incorporate the rabbi's actions and words into their lives. The disciple's deepest desire was to follow his rabbi so closely that he would start to think and act like the rabbi himself.

**f. When a Talmid falls:**

- i. Occasionally, a talmid grew disillusioned with his rabbi. Peter reached this point during the night when Jesus was arrested and imprisoned by the Roman guards. No doubt he felt confused and pained to see his rabbi being led to his death. In his frustration, he denied that he had ever known his rabbi.
- ii. For any other rabbi, Peter's action would have spelled the end of his position as a talmid. Peter seems to have thought he was finished with being a talmid because the Text tells us he went back to fishing.
- iii. But Jesus was a different rabbi. After his resurrection, he reinstated Peter, telling him to "feed my sheep." And by encouraging Peter to take the role of shepherd, a role that Jesus had filled himself, he was telling Peter, "Even though you've stumbled, you can still be like me."



**Appendix 9E – Ten questions for a disciple checkup** - From Barna, G. (2004).  
*Growing true disciples*. 28-29)

1. “Are you certain that your eternal salvation has been determined by your confession of sins and your acceptance of Christ’s gift of forgiveness?
2. Do you consistently obey Jesus’ teachings?
3. Do you always love other people in practical ways especially fellow followers of Christ?
4. Have you put the attractions and distractions of this world in their proper place and focused on knowing, loving and serving God?
5. Do you carry the burdens of following Jesus with joy?
6. Do you live in such a way as to show others what the Christian life looks like?
7. Do you relate to other Christians consistently, in a spiritual setting and for spiritual purposes?
8. Are you sharing your faith in Christ with those who have not embraced Him as their Savior?
9. Are you helping other believers to grow spiritually?
10. Do you consistently seek guidance from God in all you do?”

### **Question and Answers: (5 Minutes)**

- Give time for students to ask questions and provide simple answers.
- Remind everyone that instructors will be available after the session if they have further questions or comments

### **Review the Practicum: (5 Minutes)**

- Review where each one should be at this point.
- Mention what they need to turn in today as it was explained in the previous session
- Emphasize what they need to do for next week's meeting.
- Explain also what to do if you have fallen behind

### **Remind of next week's meeting (2 minutes)**

- Remind people at what time the next training will begin and ask them to be on time!
- Remind of the place of the next training.
- Remind also the materials they need to bring to class

### **Vision Sharing (3 minutes)**

- Share a story that will illustrate how GG help disciples grow. Be real!
- Remind the GG vision:
  - The vision of our GG is to create a movement of groups that will help each person reach those in their circle of influence, help people grow into mature disciples of Jesus and be ready for his second coming

### **Prayer**

- End the training with prayer.

# GG Leadership Development Program

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



## **Session # 10 – Multiply (to DO)**

### ***Objective of session # 10:***

1. Help students to understand the divine command of multiplication
2. Clarify the process of training new GG leaders
3. Identify the major obstacles for group multiplication
4. Provide practical tools that would help the leader multiply his group
5. Challenge each student to multiply his/her group at least once a year

### ***Materials needed for this session:***

1. Bible, GG student manual, white board and markers, pencils and papers.
2. A candle and a lighter. Computer, projector and PPT

***Suggested time for this session:*** 90 minutes

### ***Optional additional reading materials for the instructor:***

1. Boren, M. S., & Tillman, D. (2002). *Cell group leader training: Leadership foundations for groups that work: Participant's manual*. Houston, TX: Cell Group Resources.
2. Cole, N. (2005). *Organic church: Growing faith where life happens*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
3. Comiskey, J. (2003). *How to be a great cell group coach*. Houston, TX: Cell Group Resources.
4. Donahue, B., & Bowman, G. (2006). *Coaching life-changing small group leaders: A practical guide for those who lead and shepherd small group leaders*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

### ***Today's program: Session # 10***

1. Welcome and prayer
2. Thanksgiving: talk about how much you appreciate the students commitment to the training program
3. Review of today's session program: Briefly explain today's program
  - Introduction exercise
  - Study of session (fill in the blanks, exercises, discussion in groups, etc.)
  - Question and answers
  - Practicum's follow up: Homework!
  - Prayer
4. Introductory exercise
5. Study of Session # 10
6. Time for questions and answers
7. Practicum's follow up: Homework!
8. Vision Sharing: Share a story of how a leader multiplied his GG several times.
9. Prayer

**Session # 10 – Multiply (to DO)*****Introductory exercise: (10 minutes)***

1. Begin by sharing the story of a successful GG leader who has multiplied his group once or more.
  - Rebeca and Dennisse were two young girls from our Westchester church, in Miami. Rebeca was 13 and Dennisse was 9! They came to the GG leaders training because with the GG leadership team we had invited them so we could plant a new group especially for early teen girls. They attended the whole training with the adults, paying attention, answering questions, fulfilling the requirements and always, always very excited about the possibility to begin the own group. They attended not only the theory classes but also participated in one adult group watching, learning and preparing for their own. When their training was over they begun a new GG for early teen girls. There were 6 girls that night (see picture in the Power Point), and I was there with them as their pastor and leader of all GGs. Honestly the meeting didn't go so well that night because they were very nervous and were more concerned with in doing all the parts than in enjoying the meeting and ministering to each other. During the week I met with the leaders Rebeca and Dennisse to talk, debrief and make adjustments. According to them the next meeting was much better and things started to move forward. They invited more friends and soon there were many girls coming to their group. After a while one Sabbath at church both leaders were chasing me to tell me that they had two girls who wanted to study the Bible in order to be baptized! They wanted me to give the Bible studies, and I told them that they should do it and I was going to help. Even though they thought they couldn't do it at first, later it was clear they did a great job leading their friends to Jesus. Two girls were baptized that first year from that group. When the time came for the next training of GG leaders they had several suggestions of other girls to train to become leaders. By the grace of God and the hard work of the leaders, at the end of that year, the group of Rebeca and Dennisse multiplied into three groups!
2. Ask: if this two girls could do it, could you? Could this happen with your group? Why not?

***Transition (you may say):*** Today we will see why we need to prepare our groups for multiplication, the steps, tools and even the most common obstacles for multiplication that groups have. But, let's begin by reading our key passage for Session # 10, found in 2 Timothy 2:2 ....

**1. Key Passage:** 2 TIMOTHY 2.2**2. Why is multiplication so important?**

- a. One of the most controversial words in the small group and cell group movements is multiplication. While some embrace it with enthusiasm, others resist it to death! For some is a great curse that threatens to destroy the fellowship that has cost them so much to build, while others herald it as a great blessing to reach the lost and finish God's given mission.
- b. Take a look again at 2 Timothy 2.2 and answer:
  - i. How many generations of disciples are mentioned here? FOUR!
  - ii. Why is this important?
  - iii. Being able to reproduce and multiply disciples is the essence to finishing the mission of reaching the world for Jesus.
- c. Christianity is only one generation away from EXTINCTION. That is, if all disciples decide not to multiply themselves in making more disciples. So multiplication is also about survival.
- d. The Bible presents multiplication as something DESIRED AND PROMISED by God. Carefully consider the following verses and discover what they teach us about multiplication:

- i. Genesis 1.28 \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. Genesis 9.1,7 \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. Genesis 17.2 \_\_\_\_\_
- iv. Genesis 22.17 \_\_\_\_\_
- v. Genesis 26.4 \_\_\_\_\_
- vi. Genesis 35.11 \_\_\_\_\_
- vii. Deuteronomy 1.10 \_\_\_\_\_
- viii. Isaiah 40.29 \_\_\_\_\_
- ix. Jeremiah 29.6 \_\_\_\_\_
- x. Mat 14.13-21; Mr 6.34-44 \_\_\_\_\_
- xi. Mat 15.32-39; Mr 8.1-9 \_\_\_\_\_
- xii. Mk 4.1-34 \_\_\_\_\_
- xiii. John 15.8 \_\_\_\_\_
- xiv. Acts 6.1; 7 \_\_\_\_\_
- xv. When a GG multiplies it is fulfilling the divine mandate of "be fruitful, and multiply" (KJV). This order was given at creation, after the flood, as a promise of the covenant to Abraham, as a command to Jacob, and as

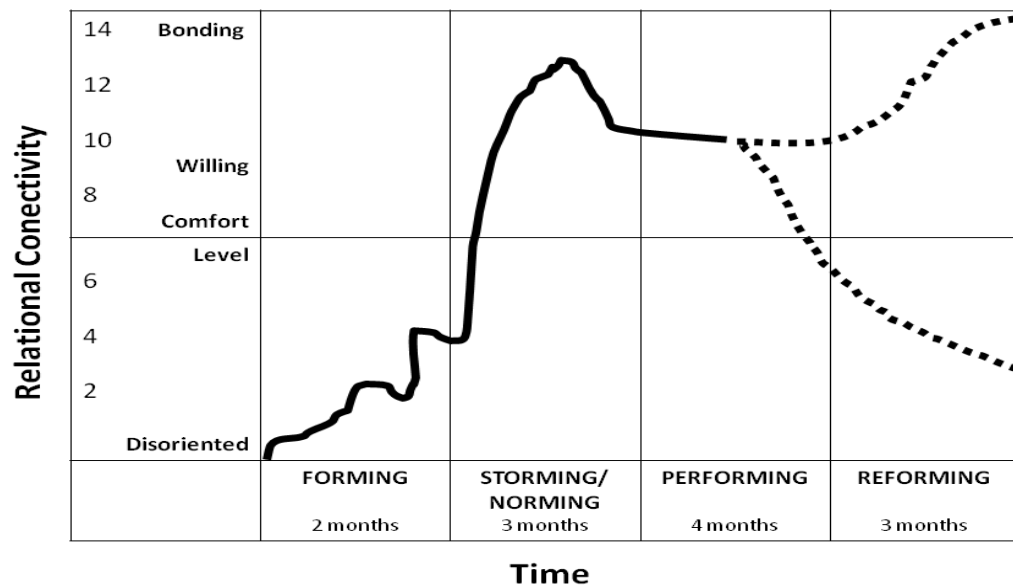
a command during the Babylonian exile. And in the NT, to bear fruit, glorifies God.

xvi. Remember: God's blessing and multiplication are often presented together (Deuteronomy 7.13)

e. Reproduction is a NATURAL part of life. Group multiplication should be something very natural for every GG!

f. Every group has a CHOICE

- i. To reform (multiply) or deform (and eventually die).
- ii. Once again take a look at the stages of group life graph.



## Exercise: (5 minutes)

- Get students in groups of two and ask them to respond the question: what do people think when they hear about group multiplication and why?
- Give them 3 minutes to discuss
- To close ask them to briefly share their opinions with the whole group.

g. What do people think when they hear about group multiplication? Why?

- i. \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. \_\_\_\_\_

**3. What is multiplication?**

- a. It is NOT: a numbers game to see who gets more, it's not manipulation, it's not breaking friendships, it's neither just a program we need to do because the conference says it's necessary.
- b. It IS: a divine plan for growth, to bring fruits that will give honor to God's name and help finish the mission.
- c. It's crucial that you and your group always call it multiplication and never DIVISION, PARTITION, or RESTRUCTURING. After all, God is not in the dividing business but He certainly is in multiplying and growing!

**4. What is the goal of your group?**

- a. What is your GG truly aiming at?
  - i. To find people who will be later invited to a series of evangelistic meetings at the temple?
  - ii. To share the right understanding of key passages and doctrines?
  - iii. To help people be transformed?
  - iv. To have fellowship and communion?
  - v. For everyone to minister to others?
  - vi. To reach the lost for God's kingdom?
- b. Every healthy GG should have the multiplication of its group as a main goal. Why?
  - i. The goal of all GG leaders is to guide the members of their group to become mature and completely committed followers of Christ.
  - ii. A mature disciple is one who is capable of discipling others. He is a disciple multiplier.
  - iii. A GG leader dreams and works hard to see all the members of its group MATURING and MULTIPLYING.
  - iv. For this reason the goal of all GG leaders is to see his members becoming leaders of GG
  - v. New leaders will mean new groups
  - vi. A group that never multiplies is a group that has not produced a sufficiently mature disciple capable of reproducing himself into another disciple.
  - vii. A healthy GG not only does evangelism, but also works hard to lead its members to complete maturity of making more disciples.
- c. Remember: a group that doesn't multiplies may end up being self-centered, full of criticism towards others and even toward themselves, will lose purpose and the mission, and can become a bad testimony for the kingdom of God.

**5. WHEN to multiply?**

- a. David Cho, the pastor of the biggest Christian church in our days (more than 1 million members), when he began his small groups had a rule that groups could only multiply when they had at least 15 FAMILIES. Should GG follow such a rule?

- b. DON'T multiply:
  - i. When you don't have trained leaders.
  - ii. Simply because you have too many people
  - iii. Because there is no more space in the house
  - iv. Because there are problems among the GG leaders
  - v. Just to reach a goal
- c. PLEASE DO MULTIPLY:
  - i. When you have leaders trained
  - ii. When you have formed a solid nucleus – team that is capable of giving birth do the new group and raise it
  - iii. When you have consulted with your GG coach and pastor
  - iv. When you have planned the birth (see attachment)
- d. FREQUENCY in which to multiply: several studies have shown that in Latin America groups multiply in average every 6 TO 9 months. In USA the average is around 1 YEAR, while in many places in Europe the average is close to 2 YEARS.
- e. The need for a SPECIFIC date:
  - i. Joel Comiskey discovered in a study that “cell leaders that don't have an specific date for multiplication that their members can remember, have a chance of multiplying of 50%, while those who have clear and define date have 75% change of multiplying.”
  - ii. It's CRUCIAL to set a date!
- f. The advantage of having a COMMON DATE for multiplication
  - i. All groups have a clear goal in mind with less chances for confusion
  - ii. Helps in the communication and promotion of the groups from the pulpit, bulletin, and in the informal dialogue with people.
  - iii. It creates a healthy INCENTIVE in leaders when all are moving forward and prepare for giving birth
  - iv. It gives the opportunity to GG coaches and directors to STRATEGICALLY REORGANIZE or plan new groups in desired areas
  - v. It allows all groups to go through the same stages at almost the same time, thus providing an opportunity to emphasize different key points in dialogues, leader's meetings, etc.
  - vi. Gives a clear opportunity to evaluate all groups as the multiplication date gets closer.
  - vii. Gives a great opportunity to celebrate the victories given by God
- g. Best and worst times to multiply
  - i. Many churches have found that the best time to plant and multiply their groups is in the FALL or at the BEGINNING of the year. Usually when school classes have begun and families have settled again is the optimal time.



- ii. The worst time seems to be during the SUMMER when people go out in vacation, visit the extended families, and there are too many distractions and activities going on. Also in many places of the world around Christmas time or the end of the year is not an appropriate time.
- iii. As a general rule, whenever two leaders and core group is TRAINED and READY, multiplication can take place, regardless of the time of the year.
- h. Remember always to follow God's direction and to talk to you pastor for advice and to see the church calendar in order to define the best dates for multiplication.

## 6. How to multiply your GG?

- a. STEP # 1: PREPARATION: Begin with yourself!
  - i. Get the vision of multiplication:
    - 1. Ask God to give you a clear vision for the multiplication of leaders and group.
    - 2. Read all you can about the multiplication of groups, listen to messages, and talk to people who have done it several times. Vision is contagious to get close to them to catch the heavenly virus!
  - ii. SHARE the vision of multiplication
    - 1. Talk about the vision of multiplication as much as possible, wherever and with whomever you get a chance.
    - 2. Do it with Godly passion
    - 3. Be always positive and make sure you emphasize the blessings of multiplying a group
    - 4. Ask your pastor to preach about it on Sabbath.
    - 5. Make sure you talk about the goal of multiplication since your first GG meeting!
- b. STEP # 2: CALL GG leaders

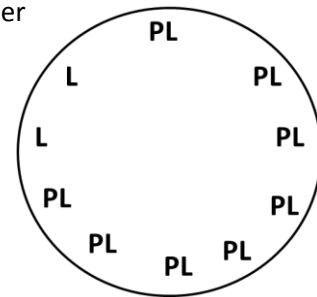
### Exercise: (5 minutes)

- Ask: Who can be a leader of a GG?
- I will help you giving you the ultimate test for GG leadership!
  - Select four people from the students (get as much as possible a very diverse group: an old woman, a young men, a highly educated person, and someone with no education at all, an Asian, Latino, or Afro-American, etc)
  - Ask the rest of the group: do you think they can be GG leaders? Well will apply the ultimate test.

- Take out the candle, set it up on the table and light it up
- Ask the first person to get close to the candle and blow it.
- If successful, then he/she can be a leader!
- Close by saying: friends, if you are alive, you can be a GG leader!

i. Step # 1: See everyone as POTENTIAL leader

1. Remember that God calls each one to make disciples/multiply.
2. Don't judge people from appearances, nationality, gender, age, or even economic or educational levels.
3. Look at the group graphic. Everyone is a potential leader!
4. Jesus saw people not as they were but as they could become.
5. Who can be a leader? Remember the candle test!



6. Try before you invite further: look for people who are:
  - a. F FAITHFUL
  - b. A AVAILABLE
  - c. I INITIATING
  - d. T TEACHABLE
  - e. H HONEST
7. DELEGATE simple ministry tasks to GG members:
  - a. Invite to accompany you when you visit others
  - b. Invite to participate, help, organize.
  - c. Invite to debrief and evaluate how things came out in the meeting or regular group life activities
  - d. Involve people in:
    - i. Coordination of group life: a picnic, birthday party, helping someone.
    - ii. Lead different parts of the GG meeting: Welcome, Worship, Wasting time (refreshments)
    - iii. Calling people to remind them of time and place of the meeting, checking how they are doing, etc.
    - iv. Visiting other people for encouragement, prayer or study.

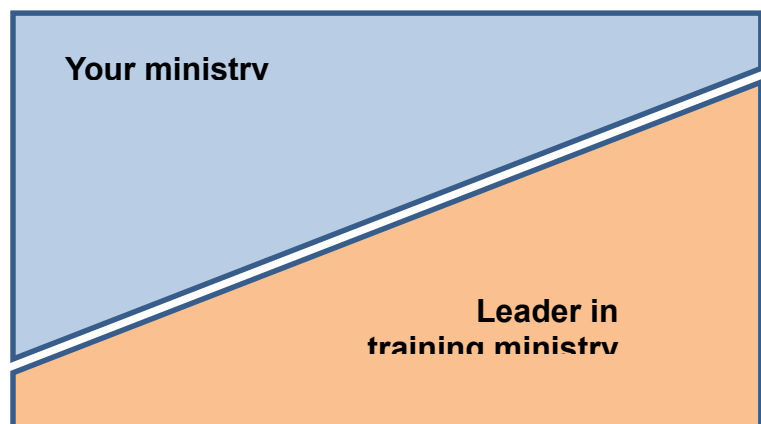
- ii. RECRUIT those who prove willing
  1. Now, even though all have the potential, not all people respond in the same way.
  2. We need to identify those who are most ready to lead a future GG.
  3. QUALIFICATIONS of people to invite for GG training:
    - a. Pr David Cho looked for people with: enthusiasm, dedication, full of the Spirit, with time and money!
    - b. Scott Boren recommends looking for people with: fidelity, availability, initiative, teachable and honest.
    - c. We look for: a person who is baptized, who understands the vision of GG, who is willing to learn, that has been recommended by at least another GG leader, or invited by the coach, director or pastor of GG.
  4. You can evaluate a candidate by asking yourself:
    - a. Who is FAITHFUL and COMMITTED to the group?
    - b. Who understands your (and the church's) VISION?
    - c. Who is eager to SERVE?
    - d. Who is GOD pointing out?
    - e. Who seems to lead the group even without a POSITION?
    - f. Who has the ability to TRAIN others?
  5. Take time to personally INVITE him/her
    - a. Nothing is better than talking to the person personally.
    - b. Mention that you and the team of GG leaders have been watching and praying for him and that you sense God leading you to invite him to take the training to become a GG leader
    - c. Make sure you mention the GOOD QUALITIES that you have seen in the person that would greatly help him to be a good GG leader
    - d. Passionately share the vision of GG, and why you believe it's so crucial to be part in it.
    - e. Explain that to take the training doesn't mean he will automatically become the leader of a new GG, there is no obligation to do it, and that at the end of the training the GG leadership team will evaluate his development.
    - f. Ask the person to PRAY about this invitation, to talk to his family and that you expect an answer from him in a week.
    - g. Caution: don't make an open invitation to everyone in the group for GG leadership training. Don't advertise it

from the pulpit. In our experience those who the Lord wants in the training will clearly show it and God will tell you to invite them.

- i. To be especially invited is 100% better than an open invitation to anyone.
- ii. Many times, I have had people thanking me with tears in their eyes, because two years before I invited them to begin the training, and because they were especially called to this ministry.

c. **STEP # 3: TRAIN** GG leaders

- i. INFORMALLY as you do group life:
  1. From the beginning involve those called into more responsibilities.
  2. Go from simple to more complex responsibilities as the person proves ready
  3. For the meeting:
    - a. take time to teach the person how to lead the 5W (welcome, worship, word, works, and wasting time)
    - b. Take time to debrief in private. Make sure you evaluate with the person what went well, what needs to be adjusted or changed
  4. Outside of the meeting:
    - a. Coordinating regular group life.
    - b. Visiting, contacting, challenging, encouraging, being available
  5. In all this process remember to encourage profusely!
  6. Practice the 80 / 20 % principle



ii. FORMALLY

1. As the person is trained informally by you, it's necessary to train the potential leader with the regular and more formal GG leadership training
2. This part is mainly done by GG coaches, directors and pastors and involves classes where other potential GG leaders come to grow in their leadership.
3. As a GG leader your part here is to:
  - a. Recommend his name for training
  - b. Encourage him along the way
  - c. Allow him to practice in your group
  - d. Debrief, challenge, and keep him accountable
  - e. Walk alongside in his development

4. Here a description of the basic course for GG leadership development

a. THEORY

- i. What you need to know
  1. Session # 1 – The dream's basics
- ii. What you need to be
  1. Session # 2 – A holistic Biblical leader
  2. Session # 3 – A kingdom led person
- iii. What you need to do
  1. Session # 4 – Lead group life
  2. Session # 5 – Lead the meeting
  3. Session # 6 – Organize
  4. Session # 7 – Relate
  5. Session # 8 – Make disciples
  6. Session # 9 – Care and grow disciples
  7. Session # 10 – Multiply

b. DOCTRINES (the 7 S)

- i. Scriptures
- ii. Sabbath
- iii. Second coming
- iv. State of the dead
- v. Sanctuary
- vi. Spirit of prophecy
- vii. Sanctified living

c. PRACTICAL

- i. Lead all parts of a GG meeting (5Ws)
- ii. Read the recommended and given books
- iii. Read the gospel of John
- iv. Make a prayer visit
- v. Complete the Practicum

d. **STEP # 4: SEND** GG leaders

- i. A healthy group will naturally move towards multiplication. When the GG leaders sense the group is ready don't delay it, release the new leaders to fulfill their divinely appointed mission

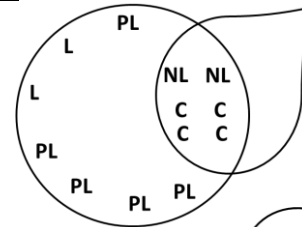
ii. **PLAN** the multiplication

1. Months before your selected date for multiplication create a plan for the multiplication of your group with the help of your GG leaders in development.
2. Analyze Appendix 10C - Planning and praying for Multiplication
3. Warning: Do not birth because your group is too big.

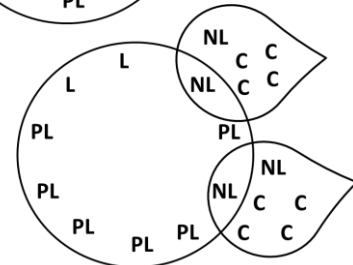
4. **STRATEGIES** to reform and multiply your group:

(L – Leader; NL – New Leader; C – Core; PL – Potential leader, everyone is a potential leader!; )

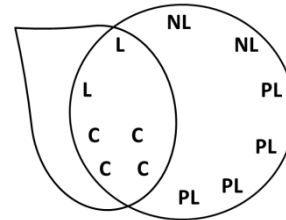
a. New leader **LAUNCH**



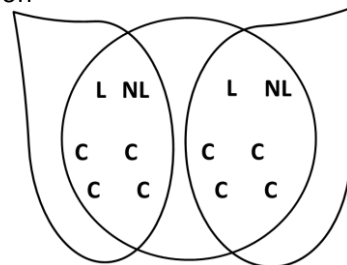
b. New leader **PLANT**



c. **OLD** leader launch



d. **ORGANIC** multiplication



5. Make sure everyone knows who will be going with who, and what is expected of each one
- iii. WORK HARD towards multiplication:
    1. Even though the growth of the group is given only by God, that doesn't mean leaders have nothing to do.
    2. Pray as if everything depended on God but work as if everything depended on you!
    3. If you want to reap a harvest, you need to sow and toil the soil. Be ready to do the same with your GG
    4. Remember: Galatians 6:9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.
  - iv. Make sure they have the right GG DNA
    1. Neil Cole argues that "in the expansion of the kingdom of God, DNA maintains the strength, vitality, and reproductivity of every cell in Christ's body" (*Organic Church*, 113)
    2. Cole argues that the essential DNA can be summarized in three crucial elements:
      - a. DIVINE TRUTH:
        - i. Truth is a person (John 14.6), Jesus, not a set of beliefs.
        - ii. God's truth is revealed through his Son and his Word.
        - iii. God's Word, the Bible, is the truth (John 17.17).
        - iv. Both of them have a connection between the human and the divine.
        - v. The agent that leads to all Truth is the Holy Spirit to whom we need to always listen and obey (John 16.13)
      - b. NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS:
        - i. Humans were created for relationships (Genesis 2.18)
        - ii. Humans need relationships in at least two dimensions, vertical and horizontal, with God and fellow human beings.
        - iii. Both relationships give true nurture and growth. This is reflected in the greatest command to love God and your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22.37-39).
      - c. APOSTOLIC MISSION:
        - i. "Apostolic means sent as a representative with a message" (*Organic Church*, 115).

- ii. Our mission and purpose in life is very simple, to make disciples out of all nations (Matthew 28.19)
  - iii. We are called to be God's ambassadors and to call people to be reconciled with Him (2 Corinthians 5.20) because his second return is close (Revelation 22.12).
- 3. If you want to transmit the right DNA to the new group, make sure the new leaders have it!
  
- v. Send always a TRAINED TEAM
  - 1. Trained GG leaders will always do better, minister better, and even multiply better!
  - 2. Never send someone alone. Send at least two as Jesus did, as Solomon advises, as Ellen G White recommends!
  
- vi. Place them under good CARE:
  - 1. New GG leaders and Groups especially need the support and encouragement of more experienced GG leaders.
  - 2. The GG coaches can guide new leaders with much love and success because they have themselves gone through it.
  - 3. Before the group multiplies make sure it will receive appropriate coaching. Every coach oversees 3 to 4 groups
  
- vii. DEDICATE the new leaders
  - 1. As part of the birthing process of the new group, ask the pastor and elder of your church to have a special moment on Sabbath to have a dedication prayer for the new leaders and their ministry.
  - 2. Make sure the whole group is present and that everyone feels it as a great privilege.
  - 3. This can also be part of the simple graduation ceremony of all new GG leaders
  
- viii. CELEBRATE!
  - 1. The birth of a new group should always be a reason for rejoicing. So as the leader of your GG organize some kind of events where your group can celebrate and rejoice together in the Lord for what He has done.
  - 2. Organize a BIRTHDAY PARTY: you can use this opportunity to glorify God because He is the one that gives the growth, share testimonies, eat together, have a cake and share it, pray for the new leaders and the core team. The mother and daughter team must celebrate together! (See Appendix 10E )



3. Organize a VICTORY DAY: This could be a special Sabbath morning or afternoon event where all groups gather and share stories, praise God, recommit their lives to God and his mission, pray for groups and invite others to join.

#### 7. Common OBSTACLES for GG multiplication

- a. Lack of vision and direction from GG leaders
- b. Lack of a clear date of multiplication
- c. Lack of focus in training new leaders
- d. Lack of a solid training for leaders
- e. Lack of a GG core and team of leaders
- f. Lack of passion for the lost (evangelism)
- g. Lack of asking members to invite and reach their circle of influence
- h. Lack of numeric growth
- i. Lack of devotional life in leaders
- j. Lack of integrity and obedience (Deuteronomy 8.1; 30.16)
- k. Lack of visitation to members and guests
- l. Lack of ministry delegating and use of people's gifts
- m. Lack of a good coach that will serve as a 'midwife'
- n. Lack of real and authentic group life
- o. Lack of preparation for GG meetings
- p. Lack of flexibility and variety in multiplication
- q. Lack of satisfaction with the leaders
- r. Lack of dedication to having only one group
- i. Lack of willingness to SACRIFICE. Dave Earley wrote: "Every fruitful small group leader practices sacrifice. Multiplying leaders know they must 'DIE' to many good things in order to accomplish the best things. They're willing to 'die' to spending their lives following SELFISH pursuits in order to achieve kingdom business and multiplied results. They know it's the time spent outside the group meeting – time spent praying, inviting, contacting, and mentoring – that makes the difference in group growth and multiplication."

#### 8. The crucial role of the coach in multiplication

- a. GG coaches can be a great blessing to all GG.
- b. At multiplication time coaches take the role of MIDWIFE, helping prepare for the birth, teaching how to stay calm, push, and keep focus!
- c. But the work of the coach for multiplication begins months before the delivery. The coach will exhort the GG leaders to prepare, train, constantly share the vision of multiplication with their groups, keep the group and leaders accountable, evaluate the health of the group, etc.
- d. For a complete description of the role of a GG coach see Appendix 10 A - Role of a Growth Group Coach (Based on How to Be a Great Cell Group Coach: Practical Insight for Supporting and Mentoring Cell Group Leaders, by Joel Comiskey)

9. Is it really possible?

- a. The imperfect but real Westchester SDA church's story (Miami, Florida, USA) – see Appendix 10 D.

August 2008	1 GG	Launching of first GG with the youth
October 2008	3 GG	First multiplication into three youth groups, each lead by three leaders
January 2009	6 GG	After more trainings six GG begin among the youth, and prayer continue to double the number for September 2009.
September 2009	12 GG	There was a huge birthday party celebrating the 12 groups and asking God to bless and help us to reach 24 by September 2010
September 2010	24 GG	By the grace of God, 24 groups are working with youth and adults involved!

- b. At the same time other churches got involved and planted many groups
- c. The Margate SDA church, under the leadership of pastor Jorge Rojas, did the training of GG leaders, and started 7 groups in 2010. In 2011 they planted a new church based on Growth Groups!

10. Our assurance

- a. **JOHN 16.23** In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. 24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.
- b. As we look forward to challenges and possibilities for growth, let us remember what Ellen White wrote in the Review and Herald of October 12, 1905:

“In reviewing our past **HISTORY**, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with **ASTONISHMENT**, and with **CONFIDENCE** in Christ as **LEADER**. We have nothing to **FEAR** for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.”

11. If you want to multiply, **EVALUATE** your group!

- a. We usually chose to evaluate and count what we **VALUE**: We count how many children get in the bus before we leave to an activity and before returning you count again to see that no one is left behind. Why do you count them? Because you value each one of them!
- b. In GG we have chosen to count and evaluate what we value. Here is the list of the things that help us to measure how groups are doing:
- i. Number of **DEVELOPED** leaders

- ii. Number of **HOLISTIC** groups
  - iii. Spiritual **GROWTH** of people in groups
  - iv. **COMMITTED** people in groups
  - v. **VISITORS** attending groups
  - vi. **BAPTISMS** from groups
- c. Counting and evaluating will allow you to have a better picture of the reality and health of your group. It will also allow you to make the necessary adjustments.

### 12. Summary: How do we do it in our Growth Groups?

- a. Potential leaders are tried out first in their GG
- b. We practice planned and assisted multiplication
- c. We have a common date for multiplication
- d. We train leaders months before, so they are ready
- e. We plant and target new GG as necessary
- f. Each GG is encouraged to multiply at least once a year, if it doesn't an honest analysis is performed, extra time is given, and if they don't grow people are reassign to other GG

### 13. Welcome to the GG Vision and Team!

### 14. Appendix review:

- a. Appendix 10A - Role of a Growth Group Coach
- b. Appendix 10B – GG structure & multiplication planning
- c. Appendix 10C – Planning and praying for Multiplication
- d. Appendix 10D – Multiplication History in Westchester Youth Ministry & Church
- e. Appendix 10E – Appendix 10E – GG Birthday party programs

#### Explain: (5 Minutes)

- Ask the students to go now to the Appendix material of this session.
- Explain the value of each material.
- Explain what you expect them to do with it.

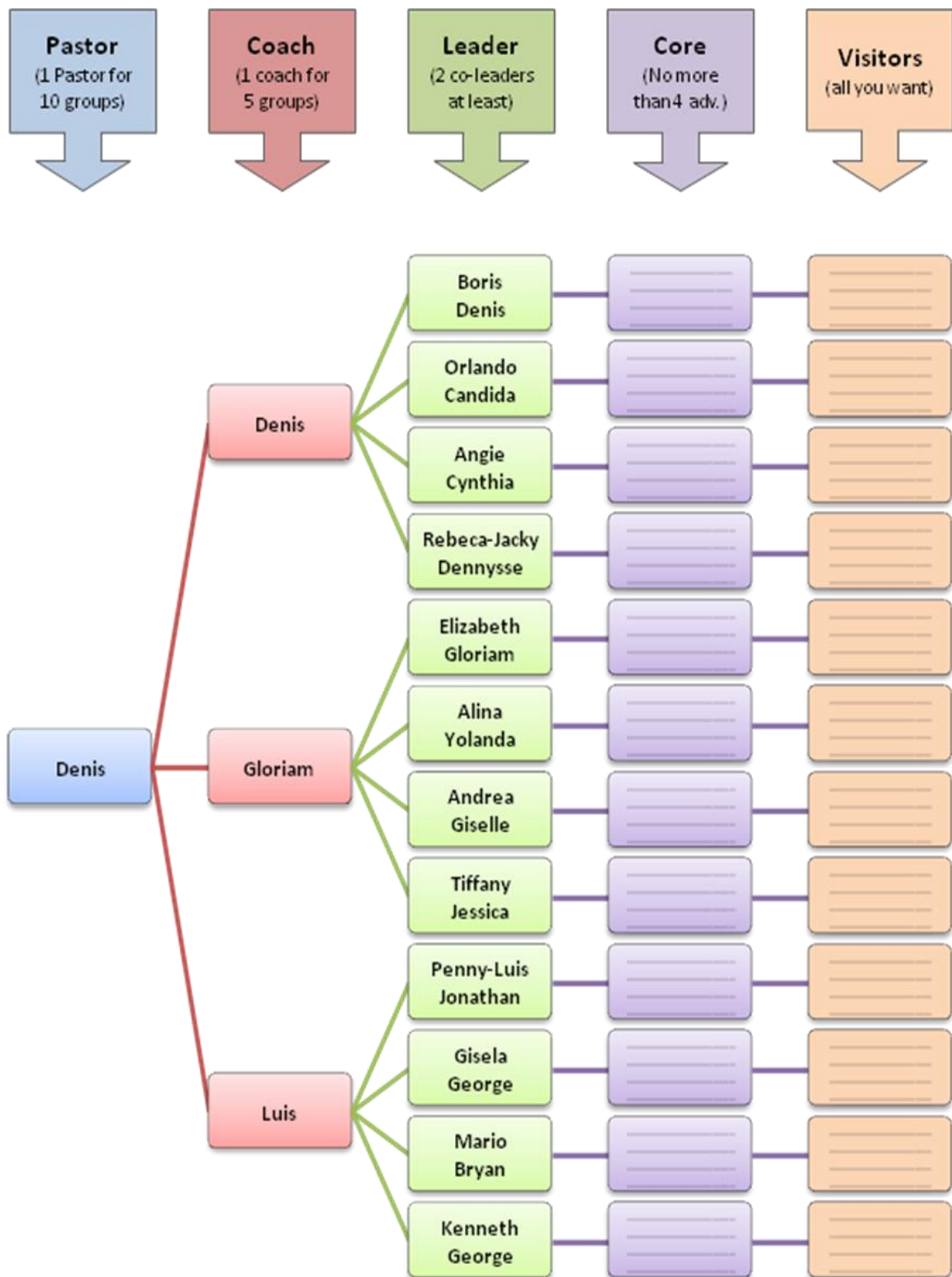
### 15. Recommended reading:

- a. Boren, M. S., & Tillman, D. (2002). *Cell group leader training: Leadership foundations for groups that work: Participant's manual*. Houston, TX: Cell Group Resources.
- b. Cole, N. (2005). *Organic church: Growing faith where life happens*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
- c. Comiskey, J. (2003). *How to be a great cell group coach*. Houston, TX: Cell Group Resources.
- d. Donahue, B., & Bowman, G. (2006). *Coaching life-changing small group leaders: A practical guide for those who lead and shepherd small group leaders*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

**Appendix 10A - Role of a Growth Group Coach** (Based on *How to Be a Great Cell Group Coach: Practical Insight for Supporting and Mentoring Cell Group Leaders*, by Joel Comiskey)

1. **A GG coach is not simply a:**
  - a. Consultant: the expert to be contacted when things go wrong.
  - b. Middle manager: gathering information from groups as reports.
  - c. Counselor: the person to go when facing major problems.
  - d. At times the GG coach will give advice, act as middle manager, and serve as counselor, but that is not his main role.
  
2. **What is a GG Coach?**
  - a. A GG coach equips the GG leaders “with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective.”
  - b. A GG coach encourages, nourishes, and challenges GG leaders to grow and multiply their groups.
  - c. “A coach is a someone who helps another person fulfill his God-ordained calling.” Joel Comiskey, *How to be a great cell group coach*, 13, 15.
  - d. The best coaches are those who are in the battle, who can say I have been there, who have successfully multiplied a group.
  
3. **Great habits of a GG coach**
  - a. Receive from God
  - b. Listen to the leader
  - c. Encourage the leader
  - d. Care for the leader
  - e. Develop/train the leader
  - f. Strategize with the leader
  - g. Challenge the leader
  
4. **The role of the GG coach will mainly encompass four areas:**
  - a. One-on-one meetings: Care and develop
    - i. At least once a month
    - ii. Evaluate the GG
    - iii. Strategy for multiplication
    - iv. Potential leaders to develop
    - v. Personal and group’s challenges
    - vi. Personal spirituality and growth
    - vii. Questions the coach may ask: “How is your time with God? What has God been showing you in his Word? What is going on in your leadership life? How can I support you in your life?” (Scott Boren)
  - b. Visit the GG regularly: Affirm and Observe
    - i. See and feel how everything is going
    - ii. Doesn’t lead, but certainly can collaborate
    - iii. Get to know people who are attending
    - iv. Support the GG leaders
    - v. Strengthen the leadership in front of the group
  - c. Lead huddles: Lead and Model
    - i. Ongoing training
    - ii. Group planning
    - iii. Help in conflict resolution
    - iv. Testimonies
    - v. Growth in leadership
  - d. Training of new leaders
    - i. The coach will help GG leaders discover new potential leaders
    - ii. Will participate in the training of new leaders either at the church official training or in the one on one as it might be necessary.

Appendix 10B – GG structure & multiplication planning



## Appendix 10C - Planning and praying for Multiplication

Under God's guidance and lots of prayer, plan your future multiplication.

All leaders of the group must be involved in the planning and so does your GG coach.

The new group will begin to meet on \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Parent group \_\_\_\_\_

The new GG plans to multiply by \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Coach's name & signature \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Leaders (2 co-leaders minimum. Each one has completed the leadership training theory + practice)

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Core group (up to 4 Adventists; this are the potential leaders to invite)

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Guests (all you want)

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_
- f. \_\_\_\_\_
- g. \_\_\_\_\_
- h. \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Place of meeting + day and time

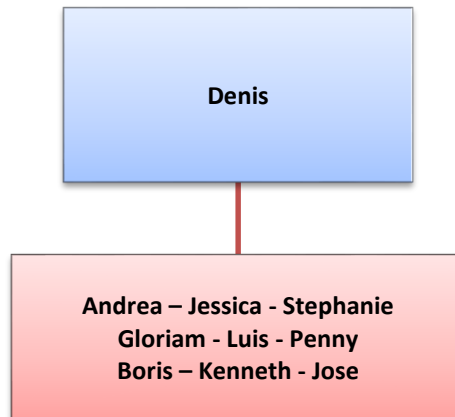
- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. Music for worship (music + lyrics)

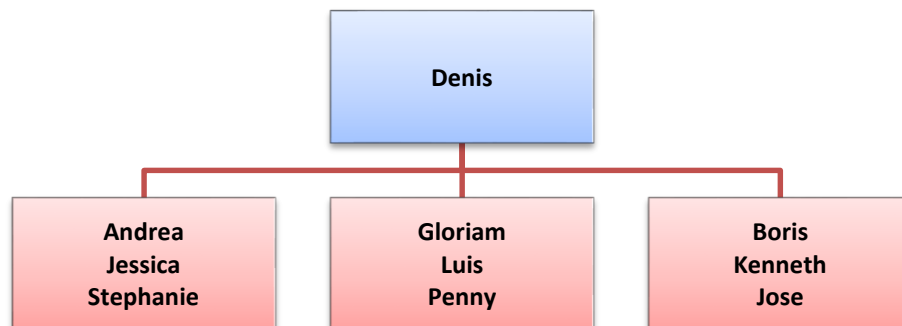
- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 10D – Multiplication History in Westchester Youth Ministry & Church

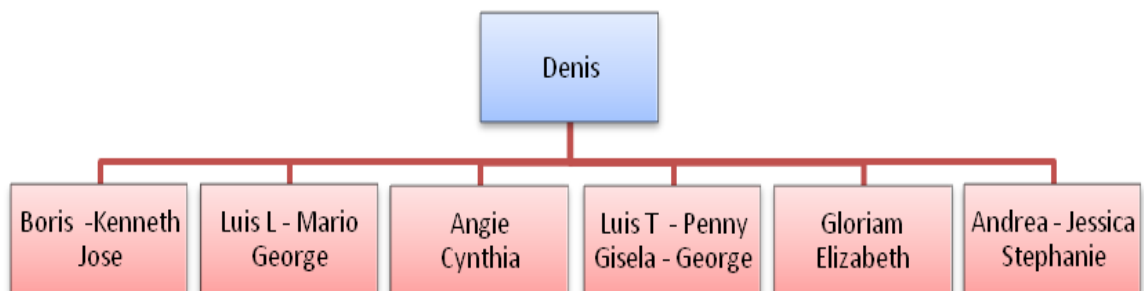
August 2008



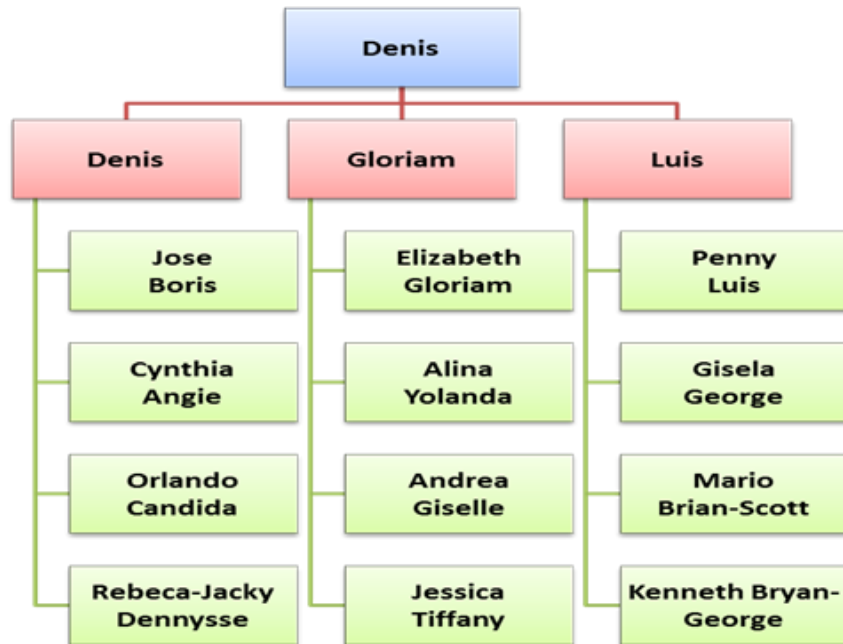
October 2008



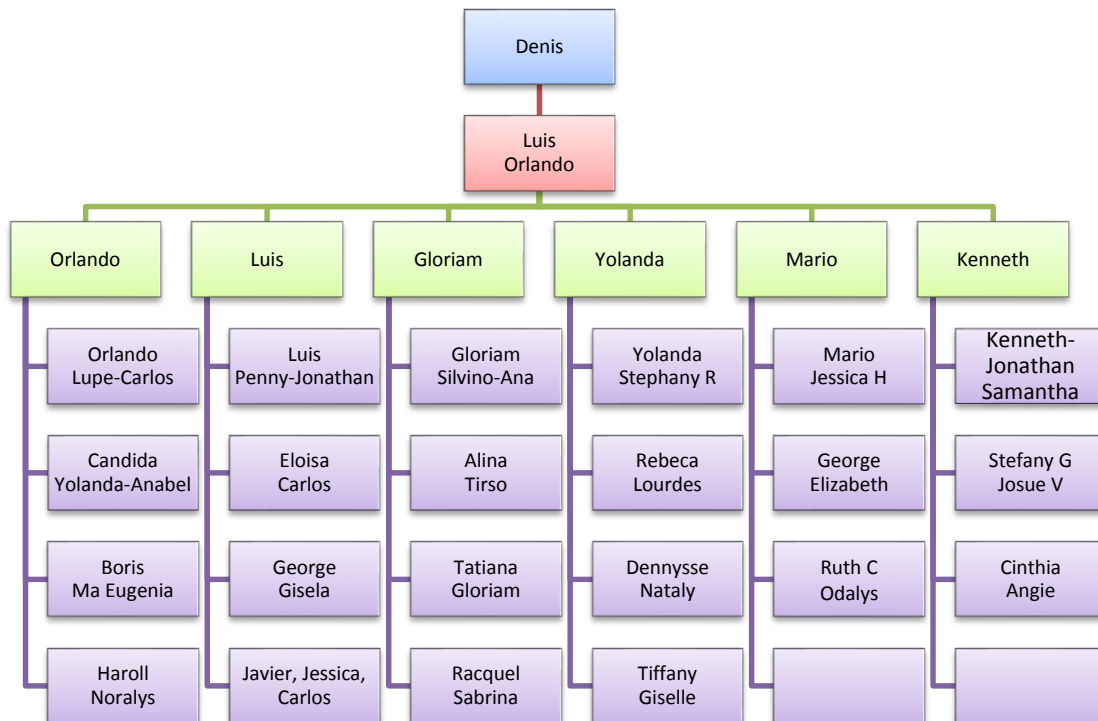
January 2009



September 2009

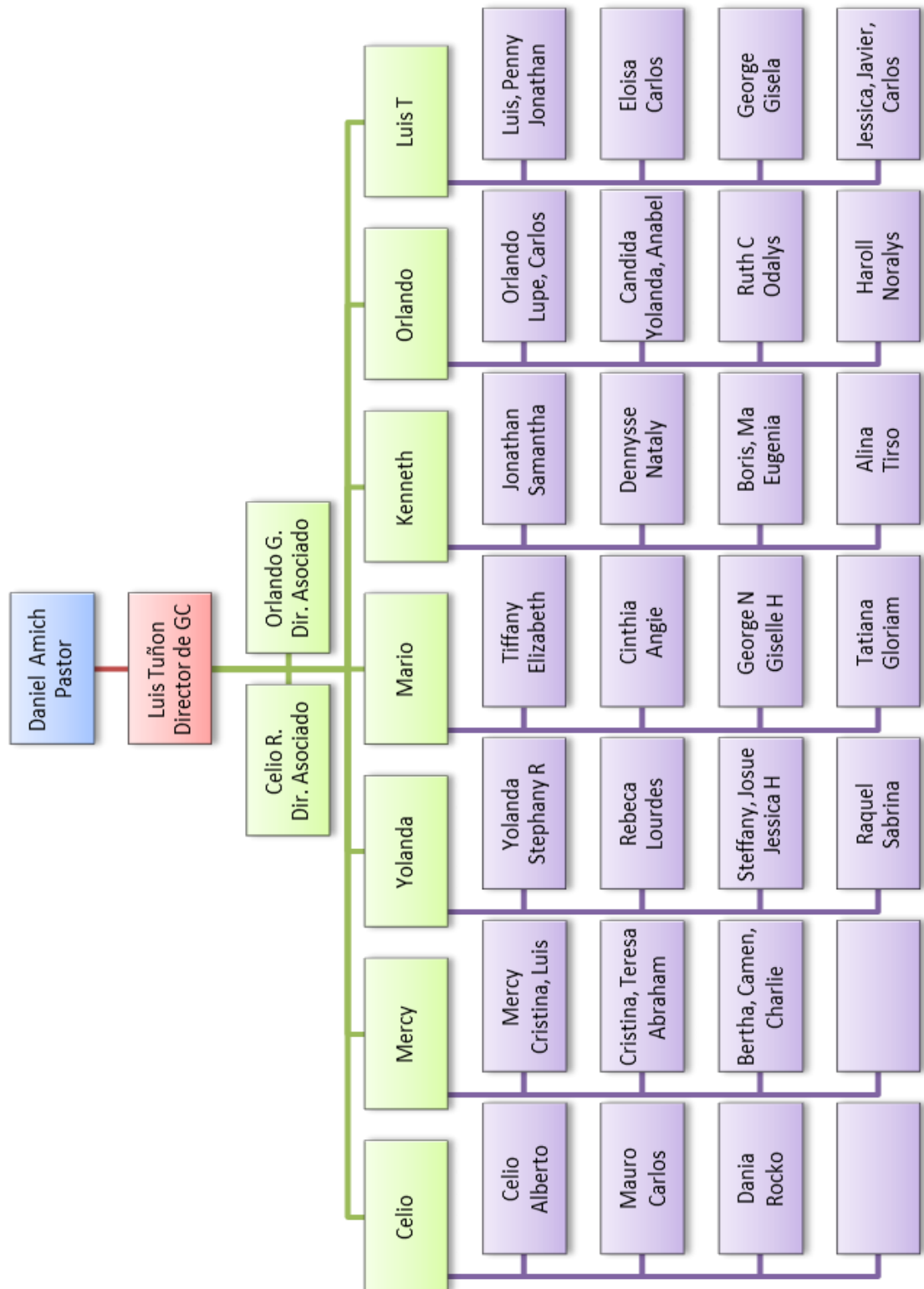


September 2010





December 2010 – Westchester SDA Church – 1st and 2nd Worship Service GG



## **Appendix 10E – GG Birthday party programs used at Westchester SDA church**

### **GG Birthday Party Program: 01-08-09**

- |                         |                                 |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Welcome              | Denis Sand                      |
| 2. Praise service       | Luis Larrazabal / Jose Dolorier |
| 3. Prayer               | Andrea                          |
| 4. Groups time          | Denis                           |
| a. Welcome: Ice breaker | Leaders                         |
| b. Word:                | Leaders                         |
| 5. Works: Vision        | Leaders / Denis Sand            |
| 6. Prayer               | Boris                           |
| 7. Wasting time         | Gloriam Gonzalez                |

### **GG Birthday Party Program: 09-03-09**

- |                                       |                              |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Welcome                            |                              |
| 2. Scripture reading                  | Psalm 63:1                   |
| 3. Praise service                     |                              |
| 4. Prayer                             |                              |
| 5. Welcome: Ice breaker               | (all groups together)        |
| 6. Word:                              | (in different groups)        |
| 7. Works: Vision                      | (all groups together)        |
| a. Our GG dream                       |                              |
| b. Our logo                           |                              |
| c. Our assurance                      | John 16:23                   |
| “nothing to fear... unless we forget” | Ellen G. White               |
| d. What’s next                        | 12 groups for September 2010 |
| See you at your GG next week!         |                              |
| 8. Prayer                             |                              |
| 9. Wasting time                       |                              |

**Question and Answers: (5 Minutes)**

- Give time for students to ask questions and provide simple answers.
- Remind everyone that instructors will be available after the session if they have further questions or comments

**Review the Practicum: (5 Minutes)**

- Review where each one should be at this point.
- Mention what they need to turn in today as it was explained in the previous session
- Emphasize what they need to do for next week's meeting.
- Explain also what to do if you have fallen behind

**Remind of next week's meeting (2 minutes)**

- Remind people at what time the next training will begin and ask them to be on time!
- Remind of the place of the next training.
- Remind also the materials they need to bring to class

**Vision Sharing (3 minutes)**

- Share a story that will illustrate how GG help disciples grow. Be real!
- Remind the GG vision:
  - The vision of our GG is to create a movement of groups that will help each person reach those in their circle of influence, help people grow into mature disciples of Jesus and be ready for his second coming

**Prayer**

- End the training with prayer.

# GG Leadership Development Program

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



## ***And now what?***

### ***How to initiate or transform your church's groups into GG?***

This manual that you have in your hands was mainly prepared to help you develop GG leaders. But, perhaps now you are asking yourself: 'and where do I begin? How can I make this a reality?'

I believe you will probably find one of two realities:

1. You don't have groups right now in your church and you would like to begin them, or
2. Your church already has groups but you would like to transform them into GG.

Allow me to suggest a plan for each option and practical steps for each one of them so you can have GG in your local church (please remember to talk with your pastor and plan with him).

#### **Option # 1 – Initiating GG from cero** (there are no groups currently working in your church)

1. **Humble yourself!** Pray, fast and seek God with all your heart and be ready to listen to his voice and direction.
2. **Investigate:** learn all you can about GG. If it's possible visit a GG meeting and participate in a Group Life in order to see and sense how it functions.
3. **Plan** choosing dates to:
  - a. Pray for the potential leaders that you will invite to take part of the training (at least one week)
  - b. Contact and invite them to participate in the vision of having GG (one week)
  - c. Receive answers from potential GG leaders.
  - d. Initiate the training: practical and theoretical ( no more than one or two weeks after receiving the confirmation from the potential leaders)
  - e. Multiplication of the turbo group (preferable 3-4 months after)
4. **Select:** in prayer select up to 12 people (or those who fulfill the requirements) that would be: faithful, available, initiators, teachable, and honest. Pray for them for one week searching God's direction and confirmation.
5. **Invite them:** Personally (not by phone, neither email, nor at a general meeting), you and this person. Invite them to be part of God's vision for GG and for the multiplication of groups and disciples. Mention why you believe they can be great leaders: example: their commitment to God, faithful, teachable, initiators, etc. Ask them to consider this offer in prayer for one week and to give you an answer at the end of the week.

**6. Begin the training:**

- a. Practical: Have small group meetings in your house for 4 months (don't do it at church). You will model not only how to lead a group meeting, but also how group life (session # 4). Furthermore, when the potential leaders have already studied how to lead the meeting, then you will delegate the different parts among the potential GG leaders so they will practice (the 5 Ws of session # 5 and be themselves hosts in their own homes). Privately debrief and make the necessary adjustments with each potential leader.
  - i. Caution! Don't think that you can skip the part of leading yourself a group, if you do, the training will only be theory.
  - ii. Remember that the best teaching is caught than taught in a classroom.
- b. Theory: At the same time that you initiate the meetings in your home, you can begin the meetings where you will be studying the 10 training sessions of this manual (you can hold these meetings at church). Plan to have 90 minutes for each session given time for questions, comments, and practices.
- c. You will be the trainer of the turbo group, showing them where they need to grow, how to do it differently, encouraging, challenging, teaching step by step and praying for and with them.
- d. Two months before the planned multiplication of this first turbo group, organize the leaders in training in groups of two or three (place them together as they will multiply later on) so they can lead all parts, practice, gain confidence and get to know better their future GG co-leaders.

7. **Celebrate:** have a party celebrating the birth of the new groups. Make sure you have a cake!

8. **Multiply:** initiate the new groups having always two or three trained leaders in each one

**9. Change your role:**

- a. From now on your role needs to change to a GG coach. You will visit the GG, support them, prepare dialogues to study, planning multiplication, personally meeting with GG leaders, etc.
- b. Your role encompasses mainly three areas: visit the GG, have personal meetings with each GG leader, lead the monthly GG leaders meeting (see Appendix 10 A)

**10. Plan:**

- a. Set a date and goal of groups for your next multiplication
- b. Set a date and goal for your next GG leaders training

11. **Evaluate and adjust** regularly

**Option # 2 – Transitioning your groups to GG** (your church has some groups, but they are not GG)

1. **Humble yourself!** Pray, fast and seek God with all your heart and be ready to listen to his voice and direction.
2. **Investigate:** learn all you can about GG. If it's possible visit a GG meeting and participate in a Group Life in order to see and sense how it functions.
3. **Dialogue** with key church leaders: share materials, testimonies of how GG function, awake interest in them. If possible, visit a GG with some of your church leaders.
4. **Create a team:** find key people who might potentially become GG leaders with whom you will form a team to prepare and lead the transition. Don't look for people just because of their position, but for their passion, whom are eager to follow the vision and whom are willing to be taught and challenged.
5. **Plan choosing dates for:**
  - a. Meeting with current group leaders
  - b. Pray for the potential leaders that you will invite to take part of the training (at least one week)
  - c. Contact and invite them to participate in the vision of having GG (one week)
  - d. Receive answers from potential GG leaders.
  - e. Initiate the training: practical and theoretical ( no more than one or two weeks after receiving the confirmation from the potential leaders)
  - f. Multiplication of the turbo group (preferable 3-4 months after)
6. **Challenge:**
  - a. Meet with the current group leaders and share with them with passion the vision for GG, the testimonies, the possibilities and challenges ahead.
  - b. Share the basics of the training plan: Theory, doctrines, and practice
  - c. Invite them to participate, but make it very clear that they can continue with their actual groups if so they desire
  - d. Put a deadline for current leaders to give an answer if they want or not to participate
7. **Select:** in prayer select up to 12 people (or those who fulfill the requirements) that would be: faithful, available, initiators, teachable, and honest. Pray for them for one week searching God's direction and confirmation.
8. **Invite them:** Personally (not by phone, neither email, nor at a general meeting), you and this person. Invite them to be part of God's vision for GG and for the multiplication of groups and disciples. Mention why you believe they can be great leaders: example: their commitment to God, faithful, teachable, initiators, etc. Ask them to consider this offer in prayer for one week and to give you an answer at the end of the week.
9. **Begin the training:**
  - a. Practical: Have small group meetings in your house for 4 months (don't do it at church). You will model not only how to lead a group meeting, but also how

group life (session # 4). Furthermore, when the potential leaders have already studied how to lead the meeting, then you will delegate the different parts among the potential GG leaders so they will practice (the 5 Ws of session # 5 and be themselves hosts in their own homes). Privately debrief and make the necessary adjustments with each potential leader.

- i. Caution! Don't think that you can skip the part of leading yourself a group, if you do, the training will only be theory.
    - ii. Remember that the best teaching is caught than taught in a classroom.
  - b. Theory: At the same time that you initiate the meetings in your home, you can begin the meetings where you will be studying the 10 training sessions of this manual (you can hold these meetings at church). Plan to have 90 minutes for each session given time for questions, comments, and practices.
  - c. You will be the trainer of the turbo group, showing them where they need to grow, how to do it differently, encouraging, challenging, teaching step by step and praying for and with them.
  - d. Two months before the planned multiplication of this first turbo group, organize the leaders in training in groups of two or three (place them together as they will multiply later on) so they can lead all parts, practice, gain confidence and get to know better their future GG co-leaders.
10. **Celebrate:** have a party celebrating the birth of the new groups. Make sure you have a cake!
11. **Multiply:** initiate the new groups having always two or three trained leaders in each one
12. **Change your role:**
- a. From now on your role needs to change to a GG coach. You will visit the GG, support them, prepare dialogues to study, planning multiplication, personally meeting with GG leaders, etc.
  - b. Your role encompasses mainly three areas: visit the GG, have personal meetings with each GG leader, lead the monthly GG leaders meeting (see Appendix 10 A)
13. **Plan:**
- a. Set a date and goal of groups for your next multiplication
  - b. Set a date and goal for your next GG leaders training
14. **Evaluate and adjust** regularly

It is my earnest desire that this two action plans that I have suggested would help you to begin or transform your groups into Growth Groups. I strongly believe that GG can be a great blessing for your church as they have been in the church that I'm serving. If you so desire, you can contact in order to further dialogue about Growth Groups.

May the great GG leader Jesus bless you and give you his peace

Denis Sand  
[dsand@growthgroups.net](mailto:dsand@growthgroups.net)

APPENDIX B  
GG DIALOGUES



# Dialogue # 001 – GROWTH

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



**Objective of today's dialogue:** Invite people to choose and commit to grow by being connected daily with God.

**Additional resources:** Read and study from *Desire of Ages*, Chapter 73, Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled, by Ellen White, pp 674-677, or read it online at: [www.egwwritings.org](http://www.egwwritings.org) or [www.whiteestate.org/books/da/da73.html](http://www.whiteestate.org/books/da/da73.html)

## **Welcome (15)** – Fellowship

- Give a warm welcome and express the purpose of Growth Groups: to grow closer to God and to help others who don't know Him yet experience the same
- Go around and ask each one to share their names and one thing that makes them good friends.
- What kind of things brakes relationships?
- What do you do to maintain your friendships?
- What practical things would you do if you wanted to make a relationship grow?

## **Worship (15)** – Worship

- Psalm 92.1-6
- I'm a friend of God
- Draw me close to you
- Sanctuary
- Thanksgiving Time: ask people to share reasons why they are thankful to God today. Take time to pray. Do a popcorn prayer with only thanksgiving.

## **Word (30)** – Discipleship

- Read John 15.1-8
- Who is the gardener, the vine and the branches?
- What is the only way to have spiritual growth and why? v5
- In what way does God prune our characters? v2
- Since Christ is the Vine and we are the branches, how should we relate to this world/ground? What would this mean practically?
- What does it mean to remain in Him? v4-8
- How can we practically remain, live, stay connected to God in the midst of all we daily do?
- What does it mean and how can we bear fruit as a Christian? v8
- What kind of fruits are you producing and which ones would you like to produce? Why?
- What do you sense God telling you tonight?
- What changes will you do this week in order to make sure you remain connected to Christ?
- To do: Write now on a small card the key text of this week John 15.5. Carry it in your wallet or pocket, place it in your fridge and make sure you memorize it.

## **Works (15)** – Ministry & Evangelism

- Share the vision with the group! Multiplication is our goal. Growth is our daily prayer.
- Ask: Do you have friends that need to grow in their relationship with God?
- Please write down their names and invite them to next week group meeting.
- How can we pray for each one's challenges this week? share your requests
- Pray in groups of two

## **Refreshments**– Fellowship

- Make sure you get to talk and know visitors!

# Dialogue # 002 – COMFORTED

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



**Objective of today's dialogue:** Challenge the group to live comforting others while we are at the same time we receive comfort from God.

**Additional resources:** Read and study the material in the following pages by Ellen White in *God's amazing grace*, 122; or read it online at: [www.egwwritings.org](http://www.egwwritings.org)

## **Welcome (15)** – Fellowship

- What could be some of the most hard and challenging situations one can face?
- How do you normally react to hardship and suffering?
- Do you have a story to share of some hardship and how you were comforter when you were a child?
- Why do people sometimes blame God for difficult circumstances?

## **Worship (15)** – Worship

- Read Psalm 145.1-5
- Shout to the Lord
- I have been redeemed
- Open the eyes of my heart
- Thanksgiving time: Ask the group to share why they are thankful to God tonight, and then have them pray giving thanks in groups of two.

## **Word (30)** – Discipleship

- Read 2 Corinthians 1.3-7
- What kind of God do we have according to v3?
- Why is God called the father of comfort? v3
- Why is it that God comforts us? v4
- How is it that God comforts us when we are troubled? v4
- What do you think is God trying to teach us in verse 6?
- How can we practically comfort others in their problems?
- How have other Christians helped you in difficult times? How did it feel? Share about that experience in a minute.
- Did God ever use you to comfort another person? How did it feel?
- How can we learn to rely more on God for comfort than on ourselves?
- What is God telling you tonight?
- Read Isaiah 51.12
  - "I, even I, am he who comforts you. Who are you that you fear mortal men, the sons of men, who are but grass, NIV
  - "I, I'm the One comforting you. What are you afraid of—or who? Some man or woman who'll soon be dead? Some poor wretch destined for dust? MSS
- To do: Write now on a small card the key text of this week, 2 Corinthians 1.6. Carry it in your wallet or pocket, place it in your fridge and memorize it.

## **Works - Witness (15)** – Ministry & Evangelism

- Do you know anyone who might be going through deep waters, troubled times, or hardship?
- What could we do this week, as a group, to show love, concern for that person?
- Consider writing a card as a group, visiting them, etc.
- Invite them to next week group meeting
- Remind your group that we are here for those who are not here yet!

## **Refreshments**– Fellowship

- Mingle and share life with people.

# Dialogue # 003 – SUCCESS

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



**Objective of today's dialogue:** Challenge your group to make the Bible their guide and final authority for all their decisions.

**Additional resources:** Read and study the material in the following pages by Ellen White in *Our Father cares*, 178; or read it online at: [www.egwwritings.org](http://www.egwwritings.org)

## **Welcome (15)** – Fellowship

- Were you ever appointed to replace a very talented and successful person? Share how it feels.
- What do you think is the reason why some people are successful in life while others are not?

## **Worship (15)** – Worship

- Read Psalms 34.1-3
- Breathe
- Above all
- Thanksgiving time: Do a popcorn prayer in which each person can give thanks to God for what he is doing in their lives.

## **Word (30)** – Discipleship

- Read Joshua 1.1-8
- What is God promising Joshua and the people of Israel? v1-5,8
- How would you feel if God promises you prosperity and success? v5
- Why do we need to be reminded that God will be at our side at all times? v5
- Why is God telling Joshua to be brave, courageous so many times? v6,7,9
- What does it mean not to turn to the right or left from the law? v7
- What do you think God is trying to tell us in v8?
- How can we meditate on it daily and keep it in our mouths? v8
- Why is success and prosperity tied with obeying and following God's counsel in the Bible?
- What benefits could we experience if we make the Bible our guide when making daily decisions?
- Share an experience where following God's advice gave you success.
- How are you integrating the principles of the Bible to your daily life?
- Would you like to study the Bible, get to know Jesus, and discover the divine principles for success?
- What is God telling you tonight?
- To do: Write now on a small card the key text of this week Joshua 1.8. Carry it in your wallet or pocket, place it in your fridge and memorize it.

## **Works (15)** – Ministry & Evangelism

- What can we do as a group to promote the Bible as the key to a successful life?
- Do you know anyone that needs to make the Bible the foundation of his-her life? how can we help them decide to follow God and His word?
- Write their names and invite them to next week group meeting
- Share the vision of reaching others so they can have Jesus as their Savior and experience real success in life.

## **Refreshments**– Fellowship

- Find the way by which you can talk to people during refreshments. Try to talk to those new in the group. Build relationships!

# Dialogue # 004 – NEED

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



**Objective of today's dialogue:** Challenge the group to accept Jesus as their personal Savior and recognize him as the solution for our greatest need.

**Additional resources:** Read and study what Ellen White wrote about it in *Desire of Ages*, chapter 61, Zacchaeus 552-556. Read it in following pages; or online at: [www.egwwritings.org](http://www.egwwritings.org)

## **Welcome (15)** – Fellowship

- What was your greatest need when you were in elementary school?
- What do people say is their greatest need today?
- What is your greatest need that you have been struggling to fill?

## **Worship (15)** – Worship

- Read Psalm 95.1-3
- We want to see
- Mighty to save
- Thanksgiving time: Ask your group to pray together giving thanks for those things that God has done in their lives.

## **Word (30)** – Discipleship

- Read Luke 19.1-10
- What kind of man was Zacchaeus according to the text?
- Why do you think Zacchaeus was so desperate to see Jesus that in order to do it he is willing to climb a tree and make a fool of himself? v3,4
- Why do you think Jesus says "I must stay at your house today" v5?
- What is our greatest need according to this story? Consider v9,10
- What is our greatest need according to the following passages? Romans 3.23; 6.23
- What is the solution for our greatest need? John 3.16; Luke 19.6,10
- Review His Story (the gospel presentation): explain it in your words
  - GOD is the Creator, is loving, holy, and just
  - US we were created perfect, but became sinful by our choice, we deserve death, and we are spiritually helpless
  - CHRIST is God, and became also a man, is perfect and without any sin, he died as our substitute, and offers his forgiveness as a gift
  - YOU & I must respond, ask Christ to be our forgiver and Master, the result is spiritual transformation, obedience and a new life
- Make a call to accept Jesus as our Savior:
  - How many here recognize we have a problem with sin, that you have tried to change many times and it hasn't work, that you and I need help from above, salvation from God?
  - Do you want to accept Jesus as your personal Savior?
- Pray for those who have accepted Jesus as Savior.
- Invite those who accepted Jesus for the first time to commit to get to know Christ personally through Bible Studies.
- To do: Write now on a small card the key text of this week Luke 19.10. Carry it in your wallet or pocket, place it in your fridge or car and memorize it during this week.

## **Works - Witness (15)** – Ministry & Evangelism

- Do you know anyone who desperately needs to find a solution to their disoriented and lost lives? share their names and pray as a group for them.
- Call them tomorrow and tell them of God's plan for their lives.
- Invite them to next week group meeting

## **Refreshments** – Fellowship

- Find the way to get to know people while eating something. Remember, build relationships.

# DIALOGUE # 005 – TEMPTED

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



**Objective of today's dialogue:** Challenge your group to make the Bible their guide and final authority for all their decisions.

**Additional resources:** Read and study what Ellen White wrote about it in *Desire of Ages*, chapter 12 - The Temptation, 114-123; and chapter 13, The Victory, 124-131. Read it in following pages; or online at: [www.egwwritings.org](http://www.egwwritings.org)

## **Welcome (15)** – Fellowship

- What are some of the hardest things for people to resist in our days?
- What are some of the hardest things for you to resist?
- What is the most tempting food for you?
- When is it harder to resist these temptations?

## **Worship (15)** – Worship

- Read Psalms 96.1-4
- I'm a friend of God
- My Jesus
- Thanksgiving time: Ask your group to share what God has been doing in their lives for which they are thankful. Pray together giving thanks.

## **Word (30)** – Discipleship

- Read Matthew 4.1-11
- How do you understand the reference saying the Spirit took Jesus to be tempted? Does it mean God wants us to be tempted? Why? v1
- What tools should we use in resisting temptation? What did Jesus use? v4
- Is temptation sin? Explain and discuss your answer. See Hebrews 4.15
- What is sin? Are the fruits of sin the same as sin? Explanation: sin is separation from God, Isa 59.1,2; example: Eve separates herself from God (sin) and then disobeys (fruit).
- Were you ever tempted beyond what you could resist? Would God allow such temptation?
- Read 1 Corinthians 10.13. What promises do you find here that would help you resist temptation?
- What is the end result of temptations and trials? see James 1.3
- In what areas are you being tempted more strongly lately?
- What steps can you take this week to resist the temptations you are facing?
- What is God telling you tonight that will help you in your transformation process?
- To do: Write now on a small card the key text of this week 1 Corinthians 10.13. Carry it in your wallet or pocket, place it in your fridge and memorize it.

## **Works - Witness (15)** – Ministry & Evangelism

- How can we help those around us to resist temptations?
- Pray for those who are falling and giving into temptation. Ask the group to invite them for next weeks GG meeting.
- What is God's vision for your group? Ask people what they think!

## **Refreshments** – Fellowship

- Discover the hobbies and passions of the people who come to the group. Begin to win their hearts!

# DIALOGUE # 006 – COST

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



**Objective of today's dialogue:** Challenge people to give it all for being a disciple of Jesus no matter the cost. To have Jesus as our top priority in our lives.

**Additional resources:** *Steps to Christ, Chapter 5, Consecration.* Read it in following pages; or online at: [www.egwwritings.org](http://www.egwwritings.org).

## **Welcome (15)** – Fellowship

- What was the cost you have to face when you decided to go to college? or move to the U.S? or even getting married?
- What made you think it was worth it?
- What helped you be willing to pay the cost?

## **Worship (15)** – Worship

- Read [Psalm 33.1-3](#)
- Shout to the Lord
- Above all
- Thanksgiving time: Give thanks as a group for the things God is doing in the world and in your life. Pray together.

## **Word (30)** – Discipleship

- Read [Luke 14.25-33](#)
- What did Jesus mean with "hate" father, mother, children, brother, sister and own life? v26
- In your words and practically, what is the cost of being a disciple of Christ? v26
- What happens when a person doesn't count the cost of being a disciple?
- What is the meaning of the phrase "carry his cross and follow me" in v27?
- What lesson about the cost of being a disciple, can we draw from the parable of building a tower and the king going to war? v28-30, v31-32
- How do you feel about the cost of being a disciple? v33.
- Why is it really worth it to follow Jesus? Read Luke 9.23-25. Explain
- What costs of following Jesus seem high to people today? And to you right now?
- How can you apply Jesus counsel in v33?
- Read Gal 2.20 and see how Paul pay the price and was living his life
- Testimony: Share what price you had to pay to be a disciple of Jesus.
- What is God telling you tonight?
- To do: Write now on a small card the key text of this week Luke 9.23. Carry it in your wallet or pocket, place it in your fridge or car and memorize it during this week.

## **Works - Witness (15)** – Ministry & Evangelism

- Do you know anyone who is struggling with paying the price of being a disciple of Christ?
- How will you help this week that person to see it's really worth it?
- Call or visit them and tell them why for you it's really, really worthy to be a disciple.
- Don't forget to invite them to next week growth group meeting!

## **Refreshments** – Fellowship

Remember to talk to visitors! Learn their names, find what they do, what they passionate about, their worries and challenges

# DIALOGUE # 007 – PURE

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



**Objective of today's dialogue:** Invite the group to be completely pure and honor God with their lives.

**Additional resources:** Read and study the material in the following pages by Ellen White in *Patriarchs and prophets*, chapter 20, Joseph in Egypt; or read it online at: [www.egwwritings.org](http://www.egwwritings.org)

## **Welcome (15)** – Fellowship

- What kind of things your parents withheld or restricted from you when you were growing up?
- Why do you think they did it?
- What effects has that have in your life today? Good or bad? Explain

## **Worship (15)** – Worship

- Read Psalms 103.1-5. Distribute verses!
- Open the eyes of my heart
- Holiness
- Sanctuary
- Thanksgiving time: Pray together givign thanks for the things God has done in your families.
- Pray together in groups of two

## **Word (30)** – Discipleship

- Read Genesis 39.1-23
- Why do you think is Joseph in Egypt? Gen 37.26,27,36; Gen 45.6-8 God had a purpose!
- Why was God blessing Joseph so much? v2,3,5,21,23
- What can we learn from Joseph's answer to sleep with his master's wife? 39.7-9
- Could you explain what are some of the things that our Master has withheld from us and why? v8
- What are some of the consequences of not being pure?
- Read Colossians 3.5,6. What is Paul telling us here regarding purity?
- Why is it that God sets for us such a high standard of purity? Read Ephesians 5.3
- King David had no TV or internet in his days! But still he wrote in Psalms 101.3, how can we apply his counsel to our lives?
- What kind of things or practices should we leave in order to obey today's call to purity?
- What did the Lord tell you tonight? What will you do about it?
- To do: Write now on a small card the key text of this week Ephesians 5.3. Carry it in your wallet or pocket, place it in your fridge or car and memorize it during this week.

## **Works - Witness (15)** – Ministry & Evangelism

- Do you know anyone who needs to grow into being pure according to God's standards?
- How can you help this person to see the need and be willing to change?
- Please pray and invite them to next week growth group meeting!
- How can this group pray for you?

## **Refreshments**– Fellowship

- Don't just eat! Please talk to visitors between bites!



# Dialogue # 008 – ONE ANOTHER

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



**Objective of today's dialogue:** Challenge the group to experience life together as a group and care for each other.

**Additional resources:** Read and study the material in the following pages by Ellen White, or read it online at: [www.egwwritings.org](http://www.egwwritings.org)

## **Welcome (15)** – Fellowship

- What is the one thing, that you remember, someone helped you with that you couldn't do by yourself when you were in elementary school? How did you feel about it?
- How easily and willingly do you share your time or talents with others? How do you feel when you do it?

## **Worship (15)** – Worship

- Read Psalms 47.1-2
- Above all
- Draw me close to you
- Thanksgiving time: Take time to pray in groups of two, but before praying ask the other person why is he or she thankful to God this week.

## **Word (30)** – Discipleship

- Read Galatians 6.1-10
- How can Paul's counsel in v1 be put into practice?
- What is this law of Christ and how does it relate to carry each other's burden? v2
- What does it mean v5 with own load relating it to carry other burdens of v2?
- How does it work the antidote for self deception? v3-4
- How the law of sowing and reaping applies to the spiritual life? v7-8
- What kind of things should we sow and not sow in order to reap eternal life? v8
- How can the promise of v9 relate to our Growth Groups?
- How can we do good to all people and specially the family of God? v9
- What changes will you make to apply these instructions?
- What is God telling you with this topic?
- To do: Memorize this week as a group Galatians 6.7. Carry it in your wallet or pocket, place it in your fridge or car and memorize it during this week.

## **Works - Witness (15)** – Ministry & Evangelism

- Make a list as a group of people who are in need and plan how you can help them carry their burdens. Be creative and practical. Do it!
- Share the vision of multiplication. Tell the group that we want to multiply this group in \_\_\_\_\_ moths so we can reach others for Christ.
- Pray together as a group for the needs people have.

## **Refreshments**– Fellowship

- Find out what visitors and new comers love doing, their hobbies and entertainment.



# Dialogue # 009 – SHOUT

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



**Objective of today's dialogue:** Challenge your GG to be missionaries in their circle of influence and bring others to Christ.

**Additional resources:** Read and study the material in the following pages by Ellen White, or read it online at: [www.egwwritings.org](http://www.egwwritings.org) You will also find the circle of influence to copy, give out and fill during Works time.

## **Welcome (15')** – Fellowship

- What is the one thing that people in your family and friends love to talk the most about?
- What do you love to talk about the most when you are with friends and why?

## **Worship (15')** – Worship

- Read Psalms 47.6,7
- I'm a friend of God
- Shout To The North
- Thanksgiving time: Take time to give thanks to God. Ask, what is the most important thing for which you are thankful to God this week? Pray together

## **Word (30')** – Discipleship

- Read Luke 8.26-39
- What would have been your reaction if you had been there with Jesus and the demon possessed man approaches you running and screaming?
- To what extent do you think demons are active today?
- Why do people fear after the miracle and ask Jesus to leave the area? v35,37
- In what ways do people today ask Jesus to leave them alone?
- Why did Jesus says no to the request of wanting to go with Him? v38,39
- What would it mean and how could we apply the command "Return home and tell how much God has done for you."? v39
- What transformation has God done, and is doing in your life that you can share?
- Why is it harder or easier to share with family, friends and acquaintances about what Jesus has done in our lives?
- What consequences could we experience if we share with others what God has done in our lives?
- What is God impressing you to do? What is He telling you through today's topic?
- To do: Work on memorizing Jesus command in Luke 8.39. Prepare this verse in a card, and invite everyone to practice it!

## **Works - Witness (15')** – Ministry & Evangelism

- Do the circle of influence exercise. Ask everyone to fill the three circles with the names of family, friends, and acquaintances who have not given their lives to Jesus.
- Ask each person to select two names. Write all those names in a "Group's Blessing List". Pray as a group for them and work to reach them.
- Our vision is to reach our circles of influences!
- Place the "Blessing List" in the middle of the group and ask each one to place one hand over the page. Pray for those names so each will be blessed and will come to give their lives to Christ.

## **Refreshments**– Fellowship

- Talk about those family, friends and acquaintances who need Christ, learn as much as you can about them, and the relationship members have with them.

# Dialogue # 010 – PRIORITIES

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



**Objective of today's dialogue:** Challenge people to make God their first and foremost priority in their lives.

**Additional resources:** Read and study the material in the following pages by Ellen White in the book *Our Father cares*, 185, or read it online at: [www.egwwritings.org](http://www.egwwritings.org).

## **Welcome (15')** – Fellowship

- What kind of things gets people or you so excited that you forget to do some other things?
- How good are you at doing what needs to be done instead of what others want, or what you feel or want to do?

## **Worship (15')** – Worship

- Read Psalms 117.1,2
- Shout to the Lord
- Be still and know
- Thanksgiving time: Give thanks in groups of three, sharing with others what God is doing for you lately. Pray in those groups

## **Word (30')** – Discipleship

- Read Luke 9.57-62
- Why do you think Jesus responds in this way to the first man in this story? v57,58
- What is the common thing between the second and third man response? And how does it relate or apply to us? v59,61
- What is Jesus asking them and us to do? And why? v60, 62
- What loyalties conflict with our commitment to Christ?
- Think about your current use of time, resources, your dreams and thoughts, what order of priorities they revealed? How do you think God feels about this?
- Read Matthew 6.33 How important is God considering your daily schedule?
- We believe God is leading the Growth Groups movement in Westchester, then what priority should Growth Groups and its activities have in your lives?
- Consider the well know phrase "First things first" along with Psalms 46.10. What should you do about it?
- What changes should we make in order to place the kingdom of God first in our lives? How can the group help in making it a reality?
- What is God telling you tonight?
- To do: Repeat together and memorize Matthew 6.33. Remember to live by it from now on!

## **Works - Witness (15')** – Ministry & Evangelism

- Ask each person to write down their priorities and then assign them a numerical order according to their importance. Challenge people to place God as number 1!
- If the kingdom of God should be placed first, consider as a group who should we visit together as a group this week. When and how? Coordinate the details and make it happen. Go visit, pray and ask for God's blessing upon them.
- How can this group pray for you tonight?

## **Refreshments**– Fellowship

- Use this time wisely. Put the Kingdom of God first in all your conversations, talking with love to visitors or new members.

# Dialogue # 011 – FORGIVING

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



**Objective of today's dialogue:** invite group members to experience forgiveness and let others free as God does with us

**Additional resources:** Read and study the material in the following pages. EGW: COL 243-51 - Chapter 19 - The Measure of Forgiveness. Or read it online at: [www.egwwritings.org](http://www.egwwritings.org).

## **Welcome (15)** – Fellowship

- What are some of the most difficult things for people to forgive in our days?
- What are some of the most hard ones for you and why?

## **Worship (15)** – Worship

- Read Psalms 103.1-5
- Holy is the Lord
- Light of the world
- Sanctuary
- Thanksgiving time: Take time to give members the opportunity to give thanks for what God has been doing in their families lives. Pray together giving thanks

## **Word (30)** – Discipleship

- Read Matthew 18.21-35
- Considering the Jews teaching of forgiving someone up to three times, how can we make sense Peter's questions? 18.21
- When you analyze the main points of this story, how does it makes you feel about the man owing 10,000 talents, the 100 denarius man and the king?
- Why is God so worry about us forgiving? Why is not forgiving so deadly?
- If God forgives us so much, why is it so hard for us to forgive others?
- What does it mean to forgive with all your heart? v35
- What would be appropriate to do when we don't feel like forgiving?
- What should be done when the other person doesn't ask for forgiveness? Consider Jesus example. Luke 23.34
- Read Luke 17.3,4. Why is God's standard so high?
- What is it harder to forgive others or yourself? why?
- If you have a testimony of how you were forgiven (not how you forgave!) share it with the group.
- Who are you going to forgive and completely release this week?
- To do: Memorize Luke 23.34. Look for opportunities to forgive others!

## **Works - Witness (15)** – Ministry & Evangelism

- Write down the names of people you need to forgive. Following Jesus example forgive them.
- Select a day when the whole group will pray and fast for our Growth Groups.
- Talk and plan multiplication of your group. Consider the why, when, where, who. What is God's vision for us? how do I fit into it?
- How can this group pray for you tonight?

## **Refreshments**– Fellowship

- Talk to people and find out the names of their friends who don't know Christ yet. Challenge people you dialogue with to invite them to the meeting and new group.

# Dialogue # 012 – REJOICE

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



**Objective of today's dialogue:** Challenge the group to live life to the fullest remembering that God will ask us to give account of everything we have done

**Additional resources:** Read and study the material in the following pages by Ellen White; or read it online at: [www.egwwritings.org](http://www.egwwritings.org).

## **Welcome (15)** – Fellowship

- What was the most exciting and fun thing for you to do when you were an early teen or teen and why?
- Is there anything you did in those days that you regret now or that if you could go back you would do different? Could you share what and why?

## **Worship (15)** – Worship

- Read Psalms 34.1-3
- Shout to the Lord
- Above all
- Thanksgiving time: In groups of three, share what God has done in your life that fills you with peace, joy, happiness.
- Pray together in those groups giving thanks for what has been shared.

## **Word (30)** – Discipleship

- Read Ecclesiastes 11.9-12.1,13,14
- Why is God, through Solomon, telling us to be happy, rejoice, follow our ways and the desires of our hearts and eyes? 11.9
- How can we have fun, rejoice in light of the judgment, as found in the second part of verse 9?
- Why is Solomon saying we should cast away all anxiety and troubles of the body? v10
- How do we usually forget our Creator in our youth? 12.1 How should we remember Him?
- Why do we need to remember and honor God before we get old? What's the difference? 12.1-7
- How do you feel about been judge for all you do?
- How the reality of judgment and eternity should affect our daily decisions? 11.9; 12.13,14
- What changes should we make to our lives in order to remember/honor Him now?
- What did you hear God telling you tonight?
- To do: Challenge the group to memorize Ecclesiastes 11.9, and live it!

## **Works - Witness (15)** – Ministry & Evangelism

- Being this the last meeting of this year before and for some before multiplication, how can we prepare for what is ahead in the new year as a group?
- What changes do we feel we need to make in order to have real group life?
- Vision: If you haven't been able to multiply, what would it take to make it happen?
- How can this group pray for you tonight?

## **Refreshments**– Fellowship

- Ask informally for people who might be invited to the new groups.

# Dialogue # 013 – SHARE

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



**Objective of today's dialogue:** invite the group to give themselves completely out of love and to live as a family of God in their Growth Group.

**Additional resources:** Read and study the material in the following pages by Ellen White: *Acts of the apostles*, Chapter 25 - The Thessalonian Letters; or read it online at: [www.egw writings.org](http://www.egw writings.org).

## **Worship (15)** – Worship

- Read Psalms 95.1-7
- We want to see
- Draw me close to you
- Thanksgiving time: Who shared something with you for which you are thankful? Take time to thank God for those He placed in your life that have share what they have with you. Pray in groups.

## **Welcome (10)** – Fellowship

- What kind of sacrifices your parents had to do for you?
- What kind of things were you willing to do, even sacrifice, for your sweet heart or loved one?

## **Word (25)** – Discipleship

- Read 1 Thessalonians 2.1-12
- Why Paul says that his visit to Thessalonica was not a failure? v1,2
- What was the double motivation behind their visit and what should be ours in our GG? v3-6
- What is and how can we accomplish the two-fold mission of our GG? v8
- How do we get to have this love for people as our motivation so we are delighted to do it? v8
- How can we have the kind of commitment Paul had, especially for the members of our GG? v9
- Why do you think Paul mentions the kind of life they lived among them? v10 Any teaching for us here?
- How can we accomplish the job described in v11-12 in our GG?
- What changes do we need to make in order to apply today's message?
- What did you hear God telling you tonight?
- To do: Challenge the group to memorize and live our GG key text: 1 Thessalonians 2.8

## **Works - Witness (20)** – Ministry & Evangelism

- Leader, this is the time to shared the vision with passion! invite everyone to join the vision not simply a group meeting. Invite them to become the family of God that reaches for the lost.
- Being this the first meeting of this new group, reflect with the group on how are we going to make this group not only work but multiply?
- Talk about details: when will we meet, where, who will be invited, how are we going to work, who are the leaders, what are our responsibilities
- How can this group pray for you tonight?

## **Refreshments**– Fellowship - (all groups together)

- When you talk, concentrate on praising God for what He has done with out GG!
- Get to know people.

# Dialogue # 014 – WORRIES

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



**Objective of today's dialogue:** Challenge GG members to take their worries to God and to experience God's peace.

**Additional resources:** Read and study the material in the following pages by Ellen White in the book *Our Father cares*, 130; or read it online at: [www.egwwritings.org](http://www.egwwritings.org).

## **Welcome (15)** – Fellowship

- What are the things people worry the most today and why?
- What are the things that you have been worrying about the most lately?

## **Worship (15)** – Worship

- Read Psalms 113.1-9
- I'm a friend of God
- Holiness
- Thanksgiving time: Take time in groups of three to thank God for the prayers He has answered in your life.
- Pray together giving thanks

## **Word (30)** – Discipleship

- Read Philippians 4.4-7
- Why do you think Paul challenges us twice with the imperative to rejoice? v4
- How can we practically rejoice always?
- Why should our gentleness be known to everyone? v5
- What kind of relationship is there between the Lord is near, rejoicing and our attitude? v5
- Why should Christians not worry? v6
- How can prayer become effective against worries? provide examples
- How is it that prayer can bring peace to our lives and minds? v7
- How did God help you not to worry? Briefly share your story
- What are you going to do this week to reduce your anxieties?
- How can you improve your time of talking and listening to God?
- If you heard God speaking to you through today's message, how will you apply it this week?
- To do: In order to reduce your anxieties memorize: Philippians 4.6,7

## **Works - Witness (15)** – Ministry & Evangelism

- Share with the group the vision God has given you for your GG. Talk confidently about the multiplication of your group and the target date.
- Ask people to share the names of those that need to be invited so they can have the peace and joy of God. Make a list and before the next meeting call everyone and ask if they invited them.
- Finalize asking the group: How can this group pray for you tonight?

## **Refreshments** – Fellowship

- Be open to talk, to get to know and find the needs of people

# Dialogue # 015 – WISE

by Pr. Denis Sand – dsand@growthgroups.net – www.GrowthGroups.net



**Objective of today's dialogue:** Invite members to analyze their way of living and to choose to be wise by following God's advice

**Additional resources:** Read and study the material in the following pages by Ellen White in the book *Be like Jesus*, 78; or read it online at: [www.egwwritings.org](http://www.egwwritings.org).

## **Welcome (15)** – Fellowship

- What do people consider foolish in our days?
- What was one of the most stupid things you have ever done and why?
- What could have made you not do it?

## **Worship (15)** – Worship

- Read Psalms 106.1-2
- Blessed be the name
- Above all
- Thanksgiving time: Have a popcorn prayer giving only thanks to God for the wise decisions He helped you to make in your life.

## **Word (30)** – Discipleship

- Read Ephesians 5.15-21
- Why do you think is so important for a Christian to live a "wise" life? v15
- How can we "make the most of every opportunity"? v16
- Paul urges us not to be fool, but to understand what God's will is. How can we get to know and understand God's will? v17
- Why is it so important to be filled with the Holy Spirit and not with other substances? v18 How do you know the Spirit is controlling your life?
- Why do you think is so important for a wise Christian to sing, praise God and talk to others about it? v19
- How can we fulfill the command to "sing and make music in your heart to the Lord"? v19
- What is the relationship between giving thanks always and for everything to God and being wise? v20 How can we do it?
- What does it mean to submit to another out of reverence for God? v21 Why is this wise?
- How will you apply this year what we have studied today?
- What changes is God calling you to make?
- To do: Be wise and memorize any verse from: Ephesians 5.15

## **Works - Witness (15)** – Ministry & Evangelism

- Once again refresh the vision for the group of being the family of God in Miami, and of multiplying believers in order to see them in heaven.
- Talk to the group about their not so wise friends who need to know God. Ask each one to write their names on sticky notes and pray for them as a group.
- Remember to ask the group: How can we pray for you tonight?

## **Refreshments** – Fellowship

- Direct the conversations during this time to how to live out what we have just studied.
- Talk to people, and listen.

APPENDIX C  
TRAINING CALENDARS



# 1st Generation GG Leadership Development Calendar

July - September 2008



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SABBATH
<b>July</b>		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 TOUCH & FEEL GG	10	11	12 THINK & PLAN GG
13	14	15 TOUCH & FEEL GG	16	17	18	19
20	21	22 FAST-PRAY GG	23 TOUCH & FEEL GG	24	25	26 THINK & PLAN GG
27	28	29	30	31		
<b>August</b>					1	2 THINK & PLAN GG
3	4	5	6 TOUCH & FEEL GG	7	8	9
10	11	12	13 TOUCH & FEEL GG	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 TOUCH & FEEL GG	21	22	23 THINK & PLAN GG
24	25	26	27 TOUCH & FEEL GG	28 FAST-PRAY GG	29	30
31						
<b>September</b>	1	2 FAST-PRAY GG	3 TOUCH & FEEL GG	4	5	6 THINK & PLAN GG
7	8	9 FAST-PRAY GG	10 TOUCH & FEEL GG	11	12	13 RETREAT GG
14 RETREAT GG	15	16 FAST-PRAY GG	17 TOUCH & FEEL GG	18	19	20 THINK & PLAN GG
21	22	23 FAST-PRAY GG	24 TOUCH & FEEL GG	25	26	27 DEDICATION GG
28	29	30 FAST-PRAY GG				

## 2nd Generation GG Leadership Development Calendar

October - December 2008



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SABBATH
<b>October</b>			1 <b>TOUCH &amp; FEEL GG</b>	2	3	4 <b>THINK &amp; PLAN GG</b>
5	6	7 <b>FAST-PRAY GG</b>	8 <b>TOUCH &amp; FEEL GG</b>	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 <b>TOUCH &amp; FEEL GG</b>	16	17	18 <b>THINK &amp; PLAN GG</b>
19	20	21 <b>FAST-PRAY GG</b>	22 <b>TOUCH &amp; FEEL GG</b>	23	24	25 <b>THINK &amp; PLAN GG</b>
26	27	28	29 <b>TOUCH &amp; FEEL GG</b>	30	31	
<b>November</b>						1 <b>THINK &amp; PLAN GG</b>
2	3	4 <b>FAST-PRAY GG</b>	5 <b>TOUCH &amp; FEEL GG</b>	6	7	8 <b>THINK &amp; PLAN GG</b>
9	10	11	12 <b>TOUCH &amp; FEEL GG</b>	13	14	15 <b>THINK &amp; PLAN GG</b>
16	17	18 <b>FAST-PRAY GG</b>	19 <b>TOUCH &amp; FEEL GG</b>	20	21	22 <b>THINK &amp; PLAN GG</b>
23	24	25	26 <b>TOUCH &amp; FEEL GG</b>	27	28	29 <b>RETREAT GG</b>
30 <b>RETREAT GG</b>						
<b>December</b>	1	2 <b>FAST-PRAY GG</b>	3 <b>TOUCH &amp; FEEL GG</b>	4	5	6 <b>THINK &amp; PLAN GG</b>
7	8	9	10 <b>TOUCH &amp; FEEL GG</b>	11	12	13
14	15	16 <b>FAST-PRAY GG</b>	17 <b>TOUCH &amp; FEEL GG</b>	18	19	20 <b>THINK &amp; PLAN GG</b>
21	22	23	24	25	26	27 <b>DEDICATION GG</b>

## 3rd Generation GG Leadership Development Calendar

May – June 2009



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SABBATH
<b>May</b>		26 <b>FAST-PRAY</b>	27	28	29 <b>Know GG#1</b>	30 <b>Be GG#2,3</b>
<b>June</b>	1	2 <b>FAST-PRAY</b>	3	4	5	6 <b>Be GG#4,5</b>
7	8	9 <b>FAST-PRAY</b>	10	11	12 <b>Do GG#6</b>	13 <b>Do GG#7,8</b>
14	15	16 <b>FAST-PRAY</b>	17	18	19 <b>Do GG#9</b>	20 <b>PRACTICUM</b> (3 PRAYER VISITS)
21	22	23 <b>FAST-PRAY</b>	24	25	26 <b>Do GG#10</b>	27 <b>DEDICATION</b>
28	29	30				
<b>July</b>			1	2	3	4
<b>August</b>	24	25	26	27 <b>BIRTHDAY PARTY</b>	28	29

## 4th Generation GG Leadership Development Calendar

October - December 2009



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SABBATH
October				1	2	3
4	5	6 FAST-PRAY	7	8	9 KNOW GG#1	10 BE GG#2
11	12	13 FAST-PRAY	14	15	16 BE GG#3	17 DO GG#4
18	19	20 FAST-PRAY	21	22	23 DO GG#5	24 DO GG#6
25	26	27 FAST-PRAY	28	29	30 DO GG#7	31 DO GG#8
November						
1	2	3 FAST-PRAY	4	5	6 DO GG#9	7 DO GG#10 Now WHAT?
December						
		1	2	3	4	5 GRADUATION

## Experience GG – Calendar – WAY 2008 – theway2c.org



	8/6	8/13	8/20	8/27	9/3	9/10	9/17	9/24
1. Leader of the day	Stephanie/ Gloriam	Andrea/ Jessica	Luis/ Penny	George/ Kenneth	Luis	Andrea	Stephanie	Gloriam
2. Place of meeting - home	Kenneth	Gloriam	Denis	Denis	Stephanie	Denis	Denis	Denis
3. Welcome	Andrea/ Jessica	George/ Kenneth	Stephanie/ Gloriam	Luis/ Penny	Andrea/ Jessica	Boris Jose Kenneth*	Gloriam Luis Penny*	Andrea Jessica Stephanie*
4. Worship	Stephanie/ Gloriam	Andrea/ Jessica	Luis/ Penny	George/ Kenneth	Stephanie/ Gloriam	Andrea* Jessica Stephanie	Boris Jose Kenneth*	Boris Jose* Kenneth
5. Word	Luis/ Penny	Stephanie/ Gloriam	George/ Kenneth	Andrea/ Jessica	Boris/ Jose	Andrea Jessica Stephanie*	Andrea Jessica* Stephanie	Gloriam Luis Penny*
6. Works	George/ Kenneth	Luis/ Penny	Andrea/ Jessica	Stephanie/ Gloriam	George/ Kenneth	Gloriam Luis Penny*	Boris Jose* Kenneth	Andrea* Jessica Stephanie
7. Wasting Time Together	Andrea/ Jessica	George/ Kenneth	Stephanie/ Gloriam	Luis/ Penny	Luis/ Penny	Boris* Jose Kenneth	Gloriam* Luis Penny	Boris Jose Kenneth*
8. Passage	Grow	Cost	Lost	One another	Victorious	Obstacles	Numbers	Boldness
	John 15.1-5	Luke 14.25-35	Luke 15.1-7	Gal 6.1-10	Rom 8.35-39	Judges 6.1-32	Judges 6.32-7.22	Acts 3.1-4.31
Person leading	*							
Group #	1	2	3					Hunger
	Andrea Jessica Stephanie	Gloriam Luis Penny	Boris Jose Kenneth					2 Kings 6.24-7.10

### Responsibilities of the Leader of the week:

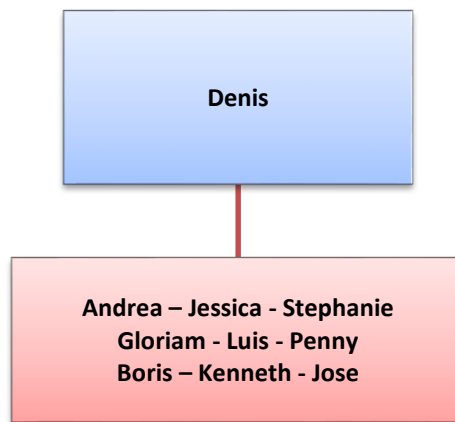
1. **Five days before the GG meeting:**
  - a. Remind and review with each person his responsibility for the next GG meeting.
  - b. Contact host to make sure everything it's ok.
  - c. Call each group member to remind them of time and place of meeting.
  - d. Invite new people.
2. **The day of the GG meeting:**
  - a. Pray that the Lord will bring people.
  - b. Remind the people you invited of today's GG meeting.
  - c. Have a group's agenda ready to run for emergency purposes.
3. **At the GG meeting place**
  - a. Arrive to the place of meeting 20 minutes early, arrange seats, help host have things ready, have refreshments ready to serve, PRAY with host and person in charge of Word, ask God to bring people to the meeting
  - b. Greet people as they arrive.
  - c. Run the meeting. Make sure the meeting begins and ends on time. Graciously help people keep their allotted time.
  - d. During refreshments time talk especially to new visitors, involve them in conversations with other group members.
  - e. Be the last one to leave. Make sure to rearrange the host's home, help to cleanup, thank host. Pray with host asking for a blessing upon them.
4. **The day after the GG meeting**
  - a. Give an encouraging call to group's visitors, and those group members that didn't come to the meeting.
  - b. Assign spiritual partners to new visitors after 2 visits. Make sure they begin Bible Studies together.

APPENDIX D  
HISTORY OF GG MULTIPLICATION IN WSDAC

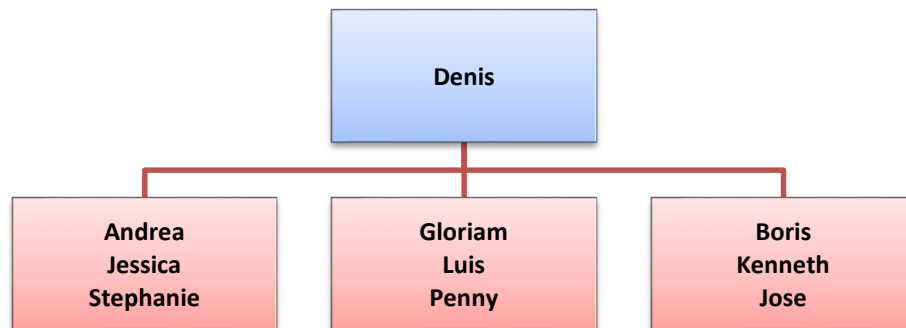
## History of GG Multiplication in WSDAC



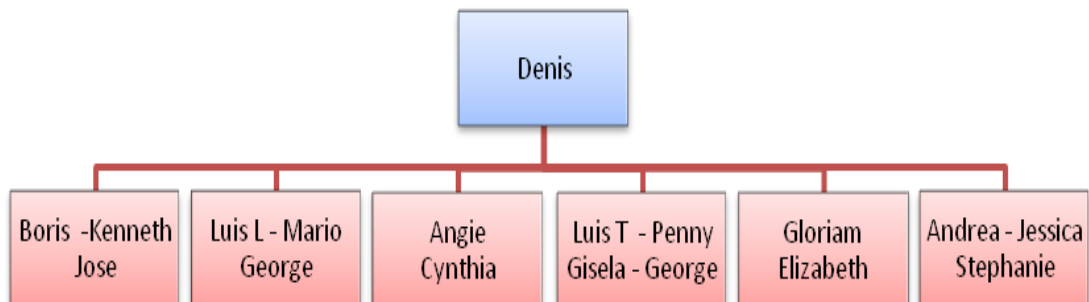
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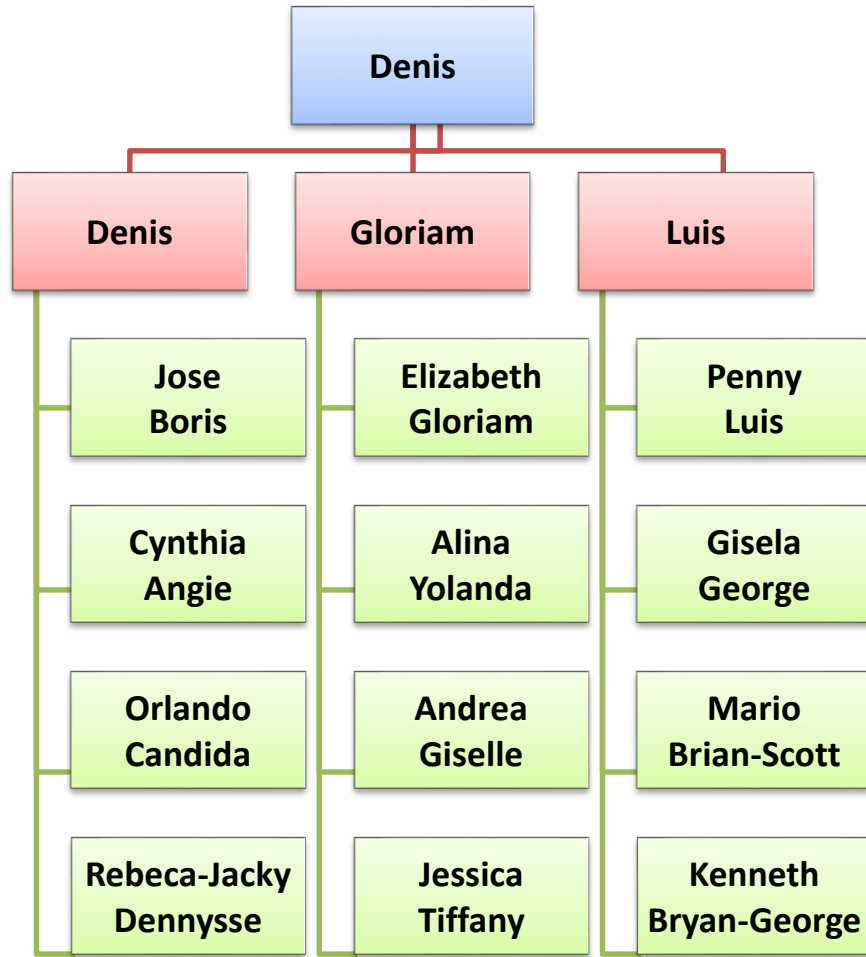
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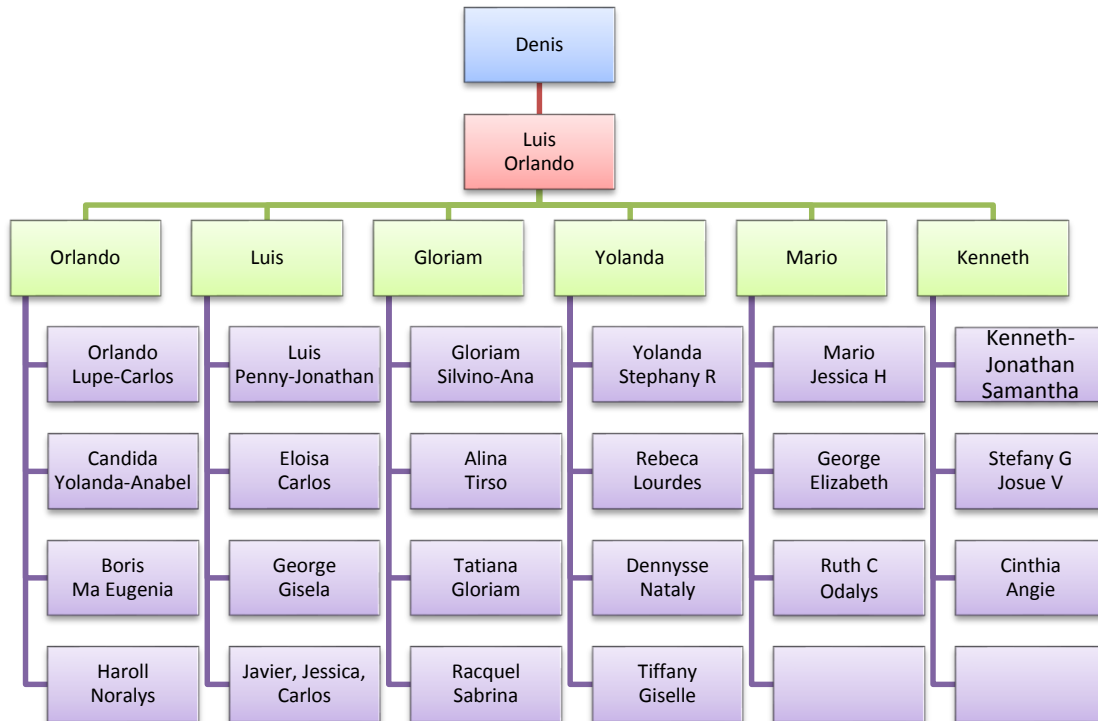


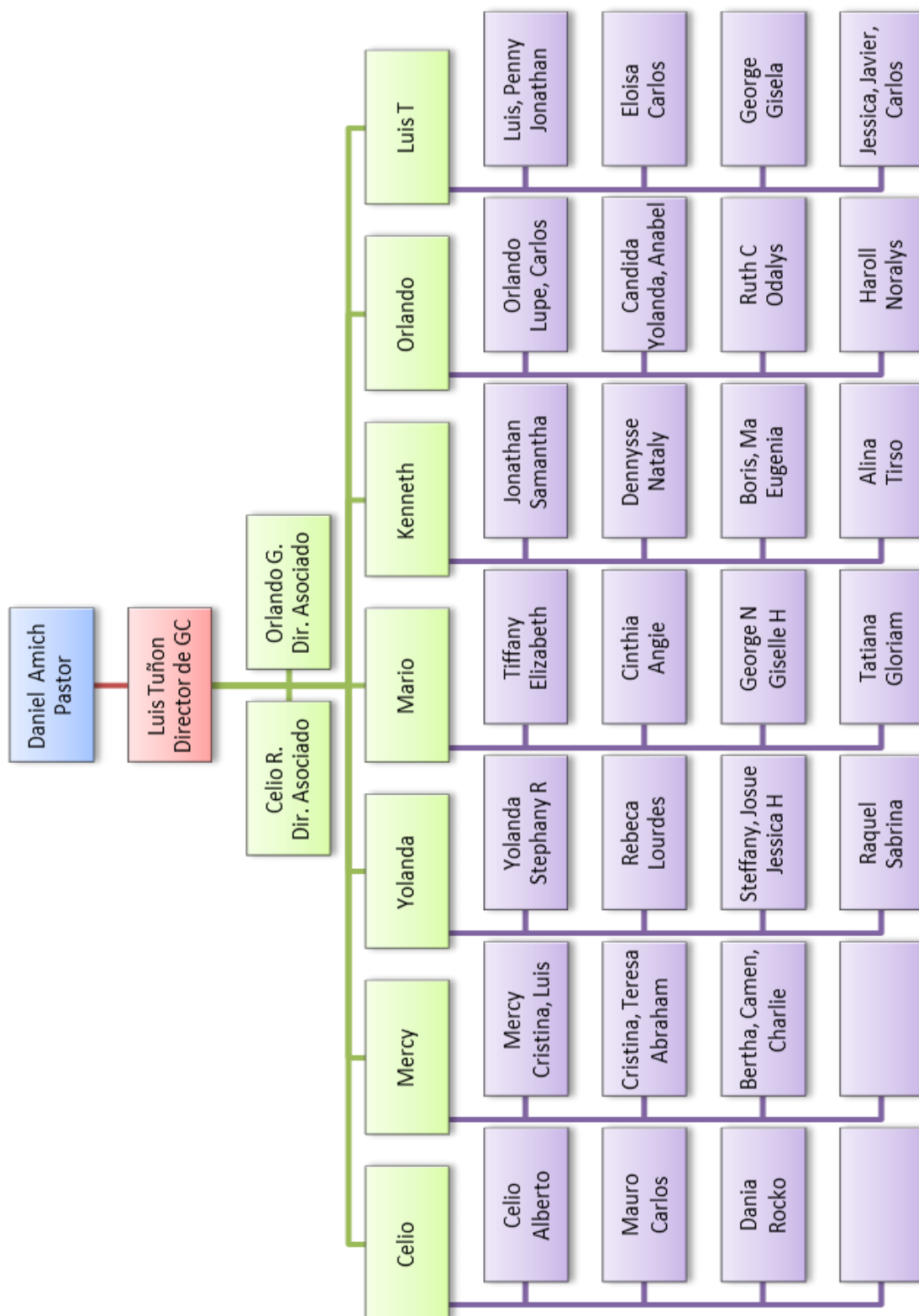
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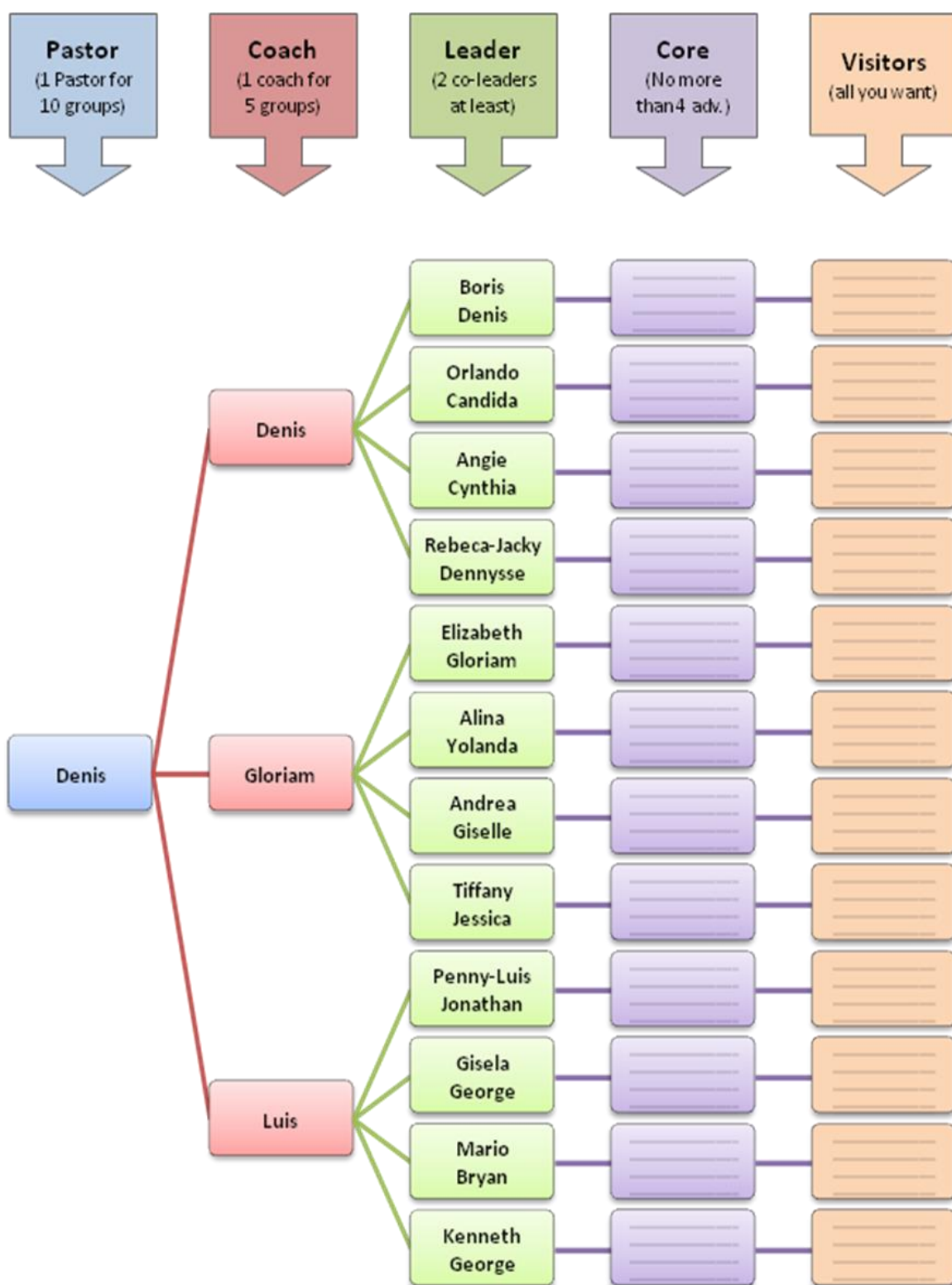




APPENDIX E  
STRUCTURE, COACHING AND MULTIPLICATION OF GG



## GG structure, coaching & multiplication



APPENDIX F  
TABLE OF CONTENTS OF GG COACHING TRAINING MANUAL

# **Table of contents** (GG Coaches Training Manual)

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APPENDIX G  
GENERATIONAL METHODS OF EVANGELISM

**Generational Methods of Evangelism** – (by Bruce Norman, *Bridging the gap: reaching the internet generation : an evangelistic strategy for reaching the postmodern generation*, 43)

Group	Pre-modern	Modern	Postmodern
Evangelistic Approach	Revelational Persuasion	Rational Persuasion	Relational Persuasion
Center	Truth/Revelation	Relational Mind	Experience/Spirituality
Philosophy	Revelation proves credibility of message	Science confirms possibility of truth	Practical living proves credibility of truth
Approach	Debate in church	Teaching in church	Lifestyle among people
Method	Tent meeting dealing with controversial differences	Revelation Seminar using health & archeological wedges	Personal fellowship groups with need sharing in dialogue
Role of Church	Military headquarters that debates truth but is separate from the world	Educational center that provides factual and scientific knowledge	Community center that provides sense of family closeness
Relationship with Interest	Short-term until baptism, then integration into regular church program	Medium-term until proper teaching is completed, then integration into church small groups	Long-term before and after baptism with integration into the church family/community



APPENDIX H  
DISCOVER 'WAY' STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND DREAMS

## Looking inside our W.A.Y. ... through the eyes of the Lord



### Discovering our strengths and weaknesses

1. Since we want to "build" (Luke 14:28-30) a strong youth ministry, in this section we want to "sit" and learn where we are right now, in other words we will evaluate ourselves!  
2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you-- unless, of course, you fail the test?
2. Instructions:
  - a. Be honest and write what you really think.
  - b. Remember that we seek the good our church's youth ministry.
  - c. Try to see beyond the apparent, the popular or even what others might think.
3. Questions: Knowing our Westchester youth ministry:
  - a. What do you think are our strengths (our strong areas, the ones you like, or the reasons to be proud)?
  - b. What do you think are our weaknesses (flaws, what you dislike, or the reasons to be ashamed)?
  - c. You have 5 minutes to write your own ideas.

#### Strengths

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
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10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Weaknesses

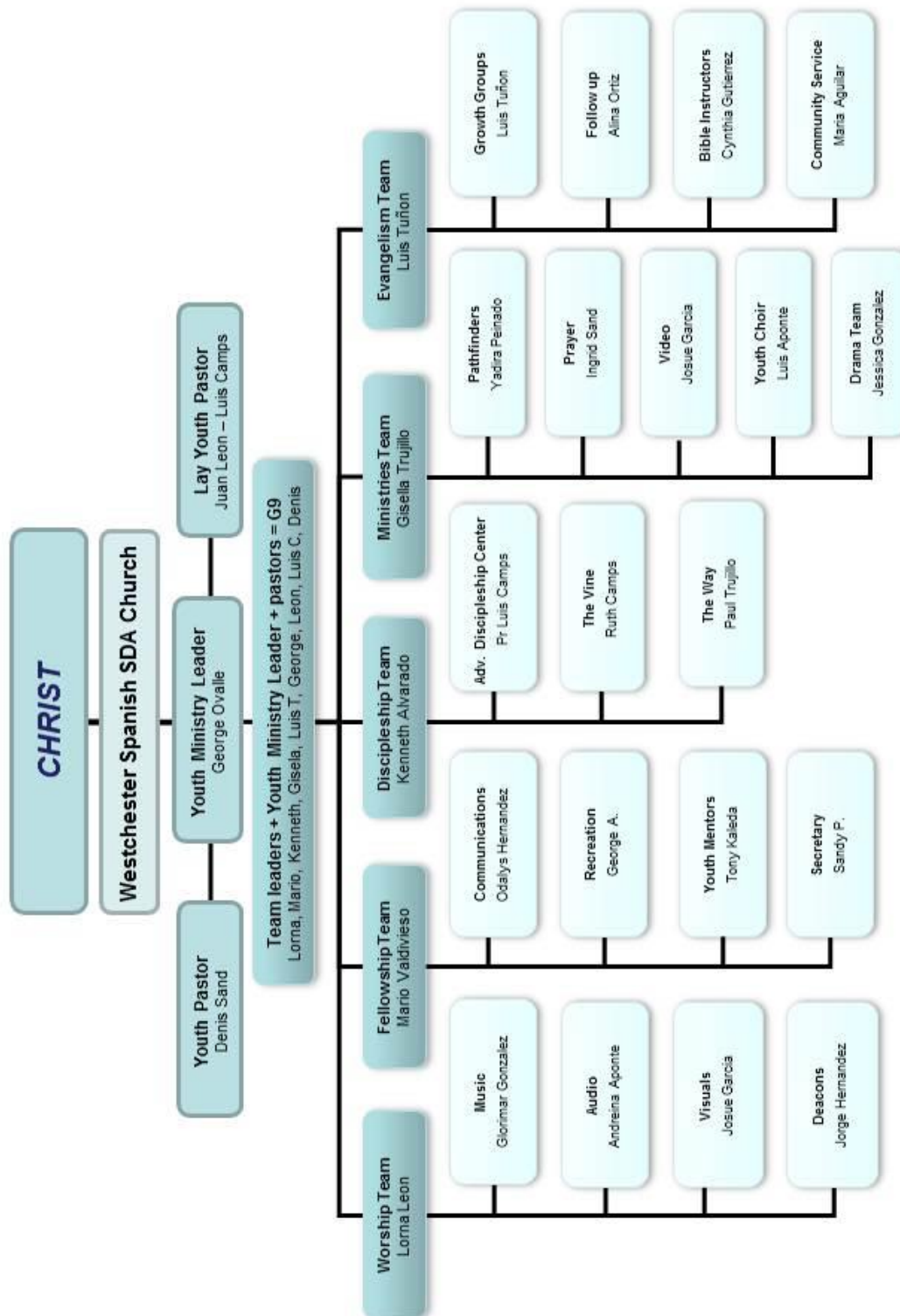
1. \_\_\_\_\_
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10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_

1. Now we will work on the "tower" that we want to build (Luke 14:28-30).
2. How is the youth ministry, or "tower", that we want to build? What does it look like? How tall is it? What functions does it have? What is it good for? Etc.
3. Maybe you are asking yourself: and for what reason do we need to know this?
4. Charles F. Kettering said: "I'm interested in the future because I will spend the rest of my life there!"
5. God wants us to build a solid ministry, one that would be balanced, full of life, which will bring honor and glory to God alone.

- a. Being in the assigned groups, please take your pencil and paper provided and please relax.
- b. With your mind and creative imagination go into the future to the year 2010. You are traveling in a balloon looking down. From there you can see everything that that takes place at the Westchester youth ministry, in and out, what they say, what they feel, and not only the members but also the community around Westchester. You can perceive not only what happens on Saturday but what happens throughout the week.
- c. Make now a detailed description of what is happening that fills you with satisfaction. Describe the activities, relationships, the environment, the building, the attitudes, the young people, the visitors, the life of the youth ministry, etc. Write what fills you with pleasure. Describe how you would like to see your youth ministry. Use the words "I see, I hear, I feel."

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APPENDIX I  
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF WSDAC YOUTH



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## VITA

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### II. EDUCATION:

**2012** Doctor in Ministry, Leadership Concentration, *Andrews University, Michigan*  
**2002** M.Div. emphasis in Youth Ministry, *Andrews University, Michigan*,  
(Graduation: May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2003)  
**1992** B.A. in Theology, *Universidad Adventista del Plata, Argentina*  
**1989** High School, Instituto Adventista Juan Bautista Alberdi, Misiones, Argentina

### III. EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE:

**2012-** Director of Adventist Mission, Evangelism and Media Center,  
Southern Union Mission, *Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan*  
**2011** Global Mission Pioneer School Director, Evangelism and Education  
Director, Southern Union Mission, *Tokmok, Kyrgyzstan*  
**2007-2011** Associate and Youth Pastor, Westchester Church, *Miami, Florida*  
**2006-2007** District Pastor of two churches, *Ann Arbor and Pontiac, Michigan*  
**2003-2005** District Pastor of three churches, *Ann Arbor and Detroit, Michigan*  
**2002** Stipend Assistant Pastor of *Ann Arbor District, Michigan*  
**1997-2000** District Pastor of seven churches, *La Paz, Entre Ríos, Argentina*  
**1993-1996** District Pastor of three churches, *Córdoba, Argentina*  
**1993-1996** Chaplain and Teacher, Córdoba Adventist Academy and Elementary  
School, *Córdoba, Argentina*  
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Backpacking, mountain biking, reading, spiritual disciplines, house churches, cell church and small groups.

